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# OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

A NOVEL

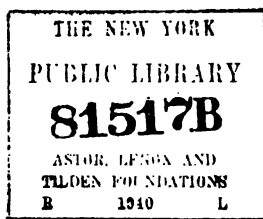
BY  
MARIA THOMPSON DAVIESS

AUTHOR OF  
"OVER PARADISE RIDGE"  
"THE MELTING OF MOLLY"  
ETC. ETC.



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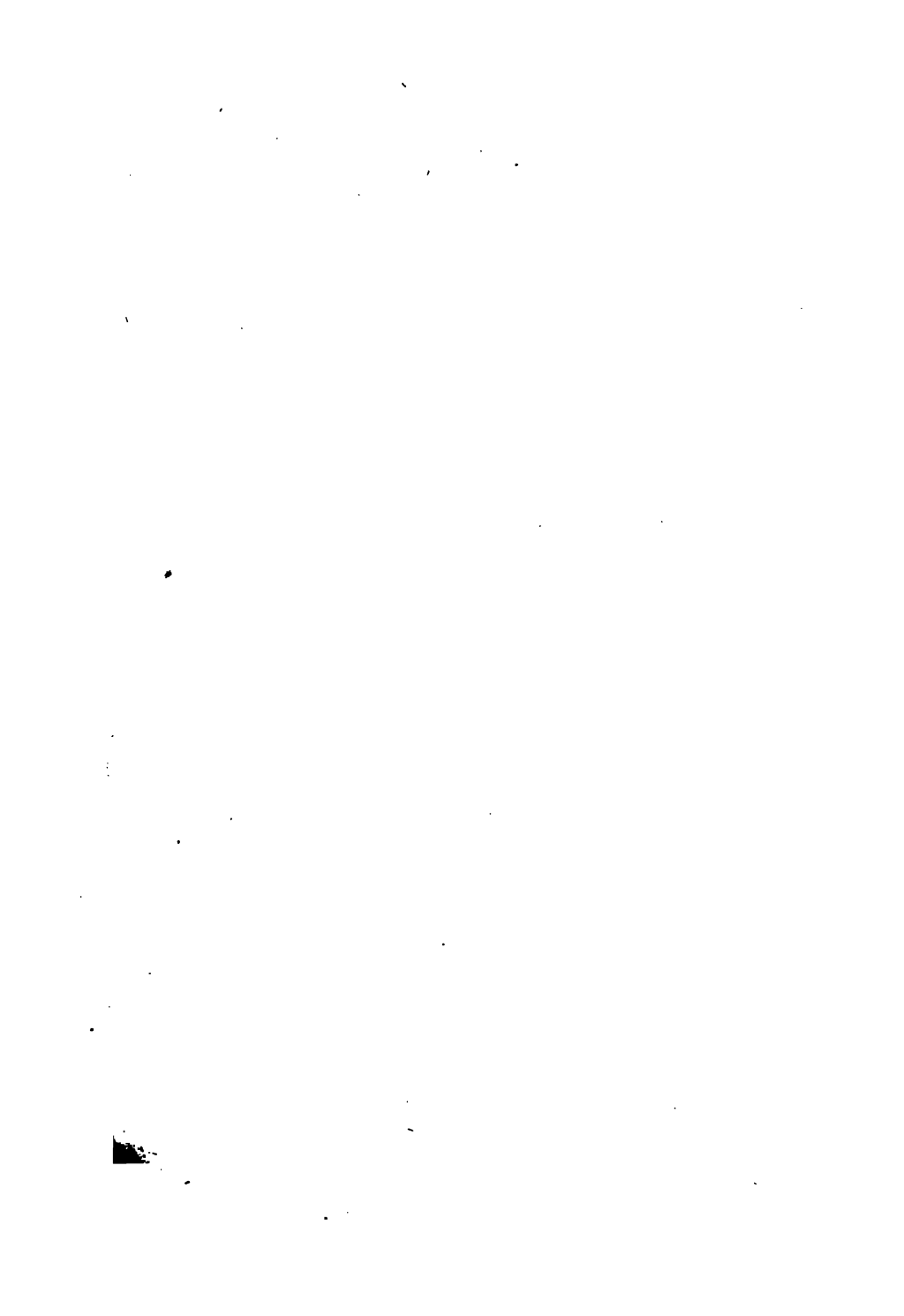
**OUT OF A CLEAR SKY**

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TO  
PASCAL COWAN, 'SQUIRE  
OF SWEETBRIAR FARM



# OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

## I

### I THROW MYSELF INTO AMERICA

"O H, I am afraid, afraid! I cannot!" I cried, when my Mees Jane Forsythe led me to the door of that railway train and told me to jump off quickly into the great gold-and-red forest, while the engine to the front of us drank water out of a large, tall receptacle that she said to be a tank.

"Jump quickly and hide behind those bushes," she urged me with a fierceness. "This is America, and whoever passes will save you. Remember the grave in Devonshire. Never let them find you. Don't write to me; I'll be watched. You have the leather bag in your satchel. Now jump, the train is moving!"

## I

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## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

And because she so sacredly urged me, I threw myself off into—America. The huge black train retreated away into the forest, and I crouched behind a large, prostrate tree—alone.

All the deep woods about me were red and gold and purple, and tall yellow-plumed flowers grew up around my refuge as if they were friends who had sprung up to hide me from my enemies, if their sharp eyes should look back to spy me from the windows of that train. A little animal that is much like those in the park in Kensington hopped on the tree quite near to me and made a curl in his tail over his back as he chattered in welcome, while a bird, above in the branches, sang with the beauty of a hymn in a cathedral into the white clouds floating over the tops of the trees. But in all the loveliness I was crouched in fear and wept. How long I shed tears I do not know, but a very sudden noise in the tall yellow flowers across the fallen tree made me to look up, and I discovered the eyes of that Meester Bob Lawrence looking at me with a great kindness, also a dog of as great beauty as the man. I now know her to be called Shep dog, and I cherish her in my heart

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

exceedingly. Also a very large horse looked over the shoulder of his master at me with a fine gentleness. I felt the greatness of my fear to be passing even before that very good and kind Meester Bob spoke to me and said:

"Hello, little girl! Are you lost? Want somebody to find you?" That Meester Bob has a voice that puts an end to fear—like my mother's hand in the dark of night.

"Oh no, Monsieur, it is that nobody must find me now. I run! Hide me, if it please you, in some dark place. I am in great fear." And I trembled as I held up my hands to that tall man and the kind horse and sympathetic dog in supplication while I further wept.

"There, there, little girl, don't cry! Nobody can get past Bob Lawrence to hurt a kiddie like you," made answer to me that kind Meester Bob, and that good Shep dog came over the tall flowers, that I now know to call goldenrod, to make the attempt to remove my tears from my cheek with her warm tongue, which caused much less weeping. At the same time Meester Bob sat down not so far from me so that his nearness made me tremble much the less.



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"Did you drop off that express by accident or because you liked this place to land in?" he made demand of me with a softness of voice.

"Do not ask me to tell you all, Monsieur; it is my dishonor," I made answer to him as I rose to my feet as tall as is possible to me and looked in his good eyes with a steadiness. "I am Céleste de Berseck and Krymn., and I seek refuge in your great woods. Will you hide me in some deepness that nobody can discover? I am in danger."

"I will protect you with my life, Madame, and hide you, if necessary, as best I can," answered that Meester Bob as he, too, arose and stood with as great a stateliness and ceremony as did I, and as if he wore the sword of the Guards at his side and was ready to bow me from the great dining-hall at Krymnwolde. "Will you tell me just what you fear and from what direction, so that I may be able to render you assistance with intelligence?"

"A gentleman will come off that train and make search for me as soon as it is discovered that I disappear. I must go far from here with great rapidity, and I am—am afraid to go

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

alone." Again the tears came and my hand made such a trembling that the good Shep dog came to press at my side and warmly mouth over my cold fingers. Then a strange lessening of the fear came upon me, even though that man across that tree, at no distance from me, was one whom I had never seen before or another at all like unto him. He was tall and fair with deepness of black-lashed gray eyes, as have the Irish, but his hair had the red gold of the forest trees. He was clad in the shirt of gray flannel and riding corduroys of a forester, but did display the manner and voice of a very fine gentleman, also with a great compassion of eye that seemed that of the own father of a frightened girl or of some great priest of the Holy Church. No, I had seen no other man like unto him.

"You shall go with me, little one, and you'll have no reason to fear anything. I'm Robert Lawrence, and I'm at your service and so is Shep here, and also Goodboy. You chose your place well to make a getaway. You are about twelve hours from the nearest habitation as the crow flies, and it will be some journey to get across to

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

Steve's cabin with all night travel. Shall we start?" And it was very good to me to hear this man speak as if it was most natural to have Céleste de Krymn drop from the clouds to journey through his huge forest with him and that Shep dog and the large, gentle Goodboy horse.

"I go with you, Monsieur—Monsieur—no, it is Meester—is it Robert of Lawrence? I do not know exactly how I must name you," I said, with a greatness of confusion that made a beautiful smile come to his kind face.

"Just Bob will do if the other name twists your tongue," he answered me with a laugh that was very warm to my tired spirit and that made me to smile a very nice smile. "Now I am going to strap this blanket on Goodboy and you can ride as comfortably here behind as if you were in a rocking-chair. We'll have to go slowly. Give me your satchel and I'll tether it on the front of the saddle." And during the time he was speaking he was arranging the horse for my comfort.

"Goodboy is not accustomed to carry double, so I'll have to get up first, and then will you

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

step up on my foot? Can you, Miss—er—Miss Céleste?” asked that Meester Bob, with so encouraging a smile that I laughed in return to him while he mounted on to the Goodboy horse and then held down his hand to me.

“That’s the skim and dip of a bird,” he said as he swung me to my place behind him and steadied me while that Goodboy made two steps to the side and one back as if in a waltz. “Now, go on, Goodboy, and show the lady your best pace.” I like it the way kind Meester Bob converses with that good horse and Shep dog very like he does to me.

And a big round sun was just getting very near to behind the much-colored tops of the trees when we started through that great forest by no path at all, except when that Meester Bob made observations at that sun and then away to a purple mountain that could at times be seen in spaces among the trees. And as that Goodboy horse went rapidly forward under the tallness of the trees and across small streams, I held myself on to the back of him by a firm grasp of that Meester Bob in the back while he at times and again did caution me—

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"Hold fast, child, while we scramble here!"

Also the good Shep dog was of a great comfort to me that she ran at the edge of my skirt and continually put nose to my shoes with a nice friendliness. Much of the time I did not weep because of a great delight in many birds that funny Meester Bob called with his whistle to circle around our heads as we went always forward with much carefulness on the part of the Goodboy horse, to whom his master did continually speak with kindly directions.

At one time we arrived at a large stream and that kind Meester Bob directed me that I should rise and kneel on the broad back of the Goodboy horse and hold to his own shoulders so that I should remain dry. The Shep dog swam beside us, and I found that I laughed when she shook the water from out her eyes so that the drops descended in a shower upon me and upon that Meester Bob. Then quickly I said in my heart:

"How is it that you laugh, Céleste, in such sorrow and danger?" A sob made me an answer to myself.

"Laugh and cry both, little girl; that's the

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

woman version of emotion," said that kind Meester Bob as he turned and assisted me to slide down on to my seat on the Goodboy horse after we had mounted the very steep bank of the small river.

I did not make answer to that remark, but held to the coat of Meester Bob very firmly as we passed over many large stones. Then again in my heart I questioned myself to know if there exist many men the like of this Meester Bob who had shown such great kindness to me and against whom I then in so short a time held no fear at all. I am very ignorant concerning gentlemen. My love for my honored father was most beautiful, but I had not much of conversation with him ever or with any of his gentlemen in waiting or his guests at Krymnwolde. At my school in Devonshire the young Sir Julian Hampton, who played the tennis with me at the permission of my dear Mees Jane in her presence, and also his good friend, Sir Arthur Cheetwood, who also desired always to play with me, are not in any way the same as this very strange and large man that I have found and that has found me in this great wood

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

in America. I pondered him deeply as I clung to his arm on descending a ravine, and I can make no answer to myself.

And to me this also is of a great confusion. Upon the terrible ship in which my dear Mees Jane Forsythe and I fled from my wicked uncle Dyreck, that very nice Prince Louis Augustus, who was my enemy in company with my uncle, did continually seek to do kindness to me in the minutes in which my dear Mees Jane lay prostrated with the sickness of the sea, but he spoke to me with fear of me and an entreaty in his eyes for something that I did not know what it was that I might give it. I felt great sympathy for his beautiful poetry in moonlight behind a chimney of the ship, with my dear Mees Jane Forsythe prostrate under the deck, and I do now regard him with a great tenderness which it is strange to feel for an enemy that pursues, but I am most glad in riding through a strange forest to cling to a man who says "little girl," and "sit tight here" to me with no more ceremony or kindness than he uses in speech with the fine Goodboy horse or the kind Shep dog. I felt a confidence to be as a horse or a dog.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

And at that moment of meditation upon the strangeness of gentlemen I became so full of sleep from a great fatigue that I laid my head against that broad back of Meester Bob so that I might not fall from the nice Goodboy horse on to that Shep dog running at my feet. All the two nights that we have remained in New York my dear Mees Jane Forsythe had made me to be clothed so that we might escape the two ladies from Berseck, whom my wicked ungle Dyreck had placed for a watch upon me. And the night upon which we did make that escape I did also not obtain sleep, for my Mees Jane wept that my wicked uncle Dyreck had discovered that flight and was upon that same train. And so I am so greatly fatigued that I must now sleep, while the back of that Goodboy horse is like unto a cradle as well as what kind Meester Bob has called a "rocking-chair." It was impossible that I could longer sit erect and I must fall against that back of kind Meester Bob.

"That's all right, little girl, go to sleep. I'll hold you on until we make camp," he assured me, and he then turned to the sideways of his



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

saddle to save me in a firm embrace. I then expired for how long I cannot tell, but all the forest was moonlight when I again opened my eyes and that Goodboy horse had stopped still with the nice Shep dog leaping and barking beside.

"Supper-time, Miss Céleste," said that Meester Bob as he gave a very small shake to me so that I sat erect on my blanket while he slid to the ground from off the Goodboy horse.

Then immediately I felt as great a hunger as I had sleep, and I willingly allowed that kind Meester Bob to lift me to the ground in hopes that a search for food would be made. Food was there!

"Gather some small sticks, Miss Céleste, and a few dry leaves while I unstrap the food wad," he advised me as he began to untie a roll of canvas from the side of his saddle opposite to that from which he had unrolled the blanket for me to ride upon. I immediately acted upon his request, and before he had spread the contents of his "wad," as it is named, upon the ground I had the fire ready for his lighting.

"Now two stones to hold the fry-pan and

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

the coffee-pot and we are in good housekeeping shape," he made remark to me as he rolled two large stones near each to the other and lighted my fire in between. "Want to fill the pot from the stream there while I put on the bacon?"

I did his bidding with a greatness of alacrity. I had never had in the preparation of food before, but I had not a very great awkwardness, though I did spill some of the dark material from which he assured me that coffee is cooked. He did not reprove me, but laughed with a most lovely kindness, and he showed me how to turn over on another side some slices of most delicious-appearing bacon that is always a part of the English breakfast and that I do like exceedingly. The instrument he gave to me was a long and two-pointed stick, which he cut from the tree overhead, and I did my task of reversing the browning strips with great seriousness, for the agony of hunger was upon me; and I felt that it was the same with that kind Meester Bob and also the good Shep dog, who with nice behavior was lying at a distance, though her tail was moving with a great fervor. Fine Goodboy horse was at supper on grass

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

near by, and also grain spread by that kind master, Meester Bob.

"Is it a very long time in which coffee is cooking, Meester Bob?" I was forced to ask as the delicious aroma encountered my nostrils from the pot in bubbling over the red coals. "Is this lovely bacon not ready for eating?"

"Poor, hungry child, here's your sandwich; go to it! I'll pour your tin cup of coffee in a minute," and while he spoke that good, kind man, who was so very hungry himself, broke open a very strange piece of yellow-brown bread, that he was toasting by the coffee-pot, put two of the most crisp and smoking slices of that very good bacon in between, and handed it to me.

"I faint," I made remark as I set teeth into that food. Then I tasted it, then I paused, than I tasted it again. "Mon Dieu, what is it, this bread?" I asked, with great rudeness.

"Corn-pone," answered that kind Meester Bob, with a large laugh that ascended to the top parts of the trees. "I had a young Englishman down shooting with me at Twin Oaks year before last and we never got him fed up

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

on it in the whole month. Last year I took him over a barrel of meal and taught the chef at his club in London how to make a pone. Wainright fed it to his relatives and friends and the barrel lasted two days, though the chef almost failed to hold out. Every month or two I send over a barrel to his old uncle, the earl. You're a real Tennesseean now, Miss Céleste; you've broken corn-pone with us," and while he said that lovely thing to me he had made also a nice supper for the good Shep dog before he had himself taken one small quantity of food.

"I wait that I break your bread with you," I answered to him while I am hardly able to keep from my mouth that very good corn-pone and bacon between.

"Well, here's to happiness for you in sunny Tennessee," he answered to me with a so great kindness in his eyes as he handed me a tin cup with coffee, which he had sweetened from another cup of sugar, and raised his own to his lips.

Then a very strange thing happened to me. That forest in the moonlight and that good, kind Meester Bob and the Shep dog and all,

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

even that corn-pone and hunger, faded away into a picture of my great home Krymnwolde, the banquet-hall, and every person drinking from crystal glasses to the happiness of my eighteenth birthday that I had come from the school in England to spend with my beautiful lady mother and so loving father and brother. Then the armies had come and Louvain and then—the grave in Devonshire. I must flee; and then I am alone in this forest and—

“Are you asleep, honey lady, before you get away with the pone and bacon? Poor, sleepy little girl!” is what I hear in the voice of that Meester Bob, and I am back by that warm fire in America with that good food in my hand and my so good friend near by my side to keep me from falling in the fire because he thinks that I am about to sleep. How can I sorrow among all that warm kindness? I laugh that I sob, and I sob that I laugh, and I begin again with hunger to eat at that most wonderful bread in my hand.

“I drink to three kind friends I find in the great woods,” I made answer to that Meester Bob with my lips on the edge of that strange

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

tin cup, while he has begun to eat and drink with the same keenness I myself feel.

"Yes, let's toast the whole family of us here! And now for more pone and bacon for you, Miss Céleste," he made answer to me. I have never seen food that goes away as quickly as that pone bread. I am ashamed, but I held out my hand for the more he was giving to me.

"I like it that you call me honey lady. That Mabel Cummins from Chicago at school has said kiddie to me and she was forbid. I do love that Mabel!" It is with great rudeness that I talk and eat at one and the same time, but I want so to say things to this Meester Bob and my hunger is not yet at an end.

"All right, I hereby christen you wee honey lady," and he made a sprinkle of one, maybe two, drops of that very good coffee in his cup on to the toe of my shoe.

I laughed with a heartiness because it is so good to make a joke after so long a sad time. Also it is good to laugh with no sob in it.

Then of a sudden I know that I have eaten three large pone breads and that I am even so sleepy as I was hungry. I am glad that Meester

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

Bob had come beside me, for I did at that moment almost fall forward into the fire. Then he took me by the shoulder with a small shake and said in so gentle voice to me:

"See here, child, there is no more travel in you, and we'll have to bivouac. Now look at me! You are just as safe as you ever were in your mother's arms, and I'm going to roll you in this blanket and put you to bed beside Shep to keep you warm. Here, Sheppie, old girl!" And that kind Meester Bob he began to wrap me in the blanket on which I have rode the Goodboy horse.

"You think that nobody will find me here in the dark even if the train was stopped very soon?" I asked, with not as much fright as sleep, while I laid me down on the ground by the fire and that Meester Bob made the good Shep dog to lie down beside me very close and nice, so that I may place my head on her neck for a pillow.

"Go to sleep, little girl; you're hid all right," Meester Bob made answer, and that good Shep dog and I both are asleep. I knew nothing more until came a dream of all the lights out

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

on the great ship and that tall officer who sent every person below into the dark cabins because of horrible mines in the ocean that we were going through.

"Oh, again I am so terribly afraid," I found that I was crying out into a great darkness just as I awoke. I was in terror, and but for that good warm Shep dog, who did growl and come up closer under my neck, I would have been in an anguish as great as was that in the wide, dark ocean with its mines thereunder.

"There, there, honey lady, you are all right! What is it?" said the lovely deep voice of that kind Meester Bob, and I saw that there is still some fire burning and, in the dark, he is sitting beside it smoking from a pipe while the Goodboy horse is lying down just beyond. The moon that had shone so like silver on the leaves now was gone, and the bright stars hung down in the tree-tops like a veil with a golden mesh.

"It is that I dreamed of the dark ship and the mines in the ocean before we came to the Liberty of America, with the lamp in her hand. Again I am frightened, and I am alone in America, and nobody knows where I am," I



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

answered, and I began to weep into the neck of the warm Shep dog, who with kindness pressed still closer and warmer to me.

"Look here, little girl, do you want to tell me all about it? Would it help? You said I mustn't ask you, but maybe— Now, there I have made a light and you can see that you've got three good friends near and are *not* lost in the dark!" And that good kind Meester Bob made a nice blaze leap up and drive the cruel darkness back behind the trees.

"It may be better that I come closer to you," I said as I released myself from the blanket and came around the fire to a greater nearness to that nice big man and his pipe that is very good to smell in the dark of the night.

"Now you are all right, honey lady," he made answer to me after he had fixed me a nice seat out of dried leaves next to his and put one more little twig on the fire to blaze away the shadows that tried to creep closer as the fire burned lower.

"Meester Bob," I inquired, very timidly, "is it that you have a young girl at your house, that you are a husband or a father, or maybe

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

a brother to because you are so kind to me?"

"No, nobody belongs to me since my—my mother died just a year ago. She had blue eyes and white hair and she was pretty young—just a girl. Now I've only a great big empty home out there in the Harpeth Valley that I don't care if I never see again. But I love my woods, five thousand acres of them! I'm marking the timber for lumber myself, because I won't trust any other logger not to take the best, while I only want to cull. It is nice to have this several million rooftrees to offer you hospitality under, isn't it?"

"Meester Bob," I made answer to him, again getting to a greater closeness, "I weep that your mother has died, but she did not lose you before she must go. My beautiful English mother did see my father go with his regiment before Louvain, and Dyreck, my brother, is also killed in that regiment. In the night she must leave Krymnwolde, that is in fire, and come many days, when she is cold and starved, to England to my school in Devonshire, to find me and my dear Mees Jane

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

Forsythe who loved my mother exceedingly. All the girls at that school are gone to their homes because of that cruel war, and I wept exceedingly when my Mabel Cummins went in the night to get in a boat that was to go very quickly to Chicago in America. Is it that Chicago is not very far away and I can go to find my Mabel to love me, now that all is lost to me?"

"You shall have that Mabel Cummins just as soon as we can get to a railroad and go to find her," answered that fine Meester Bob with a quickness and sympathy in his voice. "Mabel Cummins in Chicago may be a large order, but we'll get it filled."

"But it may happen that you also will live close by to that dear Mabel with the Shep dog and Goodboy horse while there is not anybody in your large home, Meester Bob?" I asked him, with a great suddenness. I do love that Mabel, but also that Meester Bob is much more strong and broad than is my Mabel, and I have no fear when close enough to him to perhaps touch him if a thing should happen to me.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"If Mabel doesn't mind, perhaps," Meester Bob answered to me, and it sounded like he might laugh and might sob both in his voice.

"My dear Mees Jane Forsythe is from Texas, America, and she loved my mother in that same school in England as girls," I then continued to tell. "When I was born she came from America as governess and my mother is sister to her. She died in the arms of that Mees Jane, did my beautiful mother, and she gave me to her to bring to America away from my uncle the Count Dyreck de Berseck and Krymn, who is a so wicked man as the devil. I am afraid!" This time I did get completely close to that big strong, warm Meester Bob and I trembled against his arm while he laid his hand with a gentleness on mine that was suddenly so cold.

"Don't worry over the devil here with Shep and Goodboy and me, little girl. We can match out any modern forked-tail gentleman in a red cloak," said that Meester Bob as he put another wood on the fire to blaze away the creeping blackness.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"But it is the great Emperor that I run from and must hide!"

"Well, honey lady, even the War Lord himself would find it hard to take you from the three of us. But that would sound serious anywhere except in America. Do you want to tell me all about it?"

"Oh, it is that in Belgium I am a great lady and it is needful that—" So far have I told the story of me to that Meester Bob when out in the great blackness of trees the noise of the shot of a pistol is heard to come from a not very great distance and that Meester Bob very quickly kicked some earth over the fire and assisted me to stand on my feet.

## II

### "MEESTER BOB" FINDS A HIDING-PLACE

"**T**HAT shot came from a Moersen pistol that is used in the German army," Meester Bob said, as with a great rapidness he began to put the saddle to the Goodboy horse in the darkness. "I think they have come back for you, Miss Céleste, and though I don't know just why, I am going to take you away until you can make up your mind about them. Are you sure that you do want to run away?"

"Meester Bob, I have here in my dress the knife that my Mees Jane gave to me and she did say:

"'Use it before you let them use you for your country's dishonor.' I have a great fright, but I will be dead if you do not take me into a place that I can live in hiding."

"Come here to me," said that Meester Bob,

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

with the same commanding kindness that he speaks to the Shep dog, who then is holding her warm head against my side in the dark. I went very close to that Meester Bob, who is standing beside the Goodboy horse and making him ready with the blanket and saddle.

"Give me that knife, little girl, before I put you on your blanket," he commanded to me, and immediately I slipped it, in its sheath, from my belt and laid it in his hand. "I'm going to take you to a place where there is a woman who will hide you until I can find out from you and all parties concerned just what is best for you. We must travel fast, for they evidently have some sort of a guide, and a good one at that. You'll have to put your arms around my shoulders and hold on tight. I'll break the underbrush and warn you when to duck for low branches. Now hold fast!"

And I did hold on with a great fastness to that kind Meester Bob while the Goodboy horse ran on with swiftness into the dark of the trees. Sometimes we went straight ahead and then it is that we must turn to first the right and then the left. Always I clung to

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

that Meester Bob and am safe on the blanket. At one time we went down a great steepness and he must turn and hold me in his arm with strength while we arose on the other bank through thick bushes and tall trees.

Then of a sudden we stopped very still and that Meester Bob said in a very low voice:

"Still, now, while I listen!"

And the Goodboy horse and that Shep dog and I made very little breath while he listened for something out in the darkness.

"We've put Old Harpeth between us, but they have pretty good horses and there must be at least eight of them."

"It is the gentlemen and officers of my uncle Dyreck and that nice young Prince Louis Augustus. Oh, I feel that the prince has a too great liking for me to make me to run in the dark, but it is from the Count de Berseck that I flee. I do pity that Louis Augustus."

"How would it do to stop and parley with your friend Augustus while I engage your relative as either friend or foe? Don't you think you had better?"

"No, no, good Meester Bob, it is a vow that



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

my Mees Jane did make to my mother in death that I flee. It is for Belgium, which is slain. You gave to me your promise to hide me when I did come on your horse. I have fear, and I weep that you will no longer take me to hiding. Also I did give to you my knife as hostage of trust." And as I spoke I took my arms back to myself and I sat very erect on the blanket on that Goodboy horse. I am as far away from that Meester Bob as is possible to me.

"I did give you my promise, Madame, so hold fast and we'll get away from them yet. But I wonder who is guiding them like this. I'll have to make Steve's cabin first and then round back over Paradise Ridge."

"I am so happy that I find you not untrue to me, kind Meester Bob," I said to him while I again put my arms about his so broad shoulders as that Goodboy horse began to make gallops on again through the darkness.

"This is one mad adventure to have happened out of a clear sky to a perfectly prosaic citizen of the Harpeth Valley, Tennessee, honey lady, but I'm yours to command—even in the density of ignorance as to the plot of this play. Or

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

have we both joined the movies without knowing it? Are you sure— Hello! lightning and thunder! Out of a clear sky, too!"

I had made a commencement to laugh with great pleasure at the good joke that Meester Bob had made for us about maybe our being, with good Shep dog and fine Goodboy horse, in a play that I do much enjoy at times in England, when a wind of a great fierceness came down among the tops to the trees and upon our heads. Suddenly all is light and a great fire rent the clouds of heaven just over the forests, and I heard the roll of thunder that was so like the great guns that I clung very close to that good, broad Meester Bob in another kind of anguish of fear.

"Hold tight, little girl, while I make a dash up the ravine to Steve's cabin. It will be a race with the deluge. These electrical rain-storms come and pass in the twinkling of an eye. Poor Augustus, do you suppose he has his gum coat with him?"

I do not see how it is that the kind Meester Bob could make a joke of that poor young prince for me at that moment, but while the

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

thunder intoned and lightning glared and the Goodboy horse made so wild plunges over prostrated trees and very large rocks, I clung very close to the coat on the back of that Meester Bob and permitted myself one fine laugh at a maybe very wet prince.

Then of a great sudden we turned from the forest into a wide road, and I saw a light that was in the window of a house not far distant.

"I am afraid again, Meester Bob," I said, very close to his ear because of the loud growl from the dark clouds that did appear to hang so near down upon our heads with now no more forest to hold them aloft.

"That's Steve Budd's cottage, and Steve and Mamie are just two more friends for you in the wilderness. Cheer up!" answered that kind Meester Bob, turning his head very near to mine also because of the loud noise from the clouds.

"Is it that this Steve and this Mamie are the retainers of your house?" I asked, in a small, quiet space of time.

"Yes, you might call them that if they didn't hear you," made reply that nice Meester Bob,

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

with a laugh that I felt, although I was not able to completely hear it. "I have faith to believe that you will make a hit with the pair of them."

"What is it, that 'make a hit' which you wish that I should do to this Steve and this Mamie?" I asked Meester Bob in between lightnings. "Is it some American form of salutation? I wish that you would teach me these American customs with friends. I do so very much like—" And as I spoke a very bright flash of light made visible a long distance down the wide road, and close at hand we beheld a body of horsemen also coming rapidly out of the tumult of storm.

"Lie still here where I drop you," commanded that Meester Bob to me very quickly, and he drove the Goodboy horse into the darkness of a great rock and slid me off of my blanket into a thickness of bush and darkness. "Cover close with the blanket and wait until I come back for you. Here, Shep, you'll have to come with me," and with which words he rode in the direction of my wicked uncle Dyreck and that poor young Louis Augustus, who would have

## OUT OF A CLEAR 'SKY

grieved exceedingly that I had to lie in the darkness under the blanket from a horse and maybe be wet with the rain because of a flight from him. I do pity that Louis Augustus.

And while I lay in that darkness by the great rock I listened to hear if any words could come to me across the thunder and the loudness of my own heart. I then heard the trample of horses and a man's laugh that I knew was from my hated relative, Uncle Dyreck. I put aside a little corner of the blanket and looked out on the road while one long flash gave the light of day. And what did I see? My kind, good Meester Bob is riding between the Count de Berseck and the Prince Louis Augustus with a great friendliness that is perhaps a forgetting of my hatred and his promise to me? I do not know, but I wait.

"So you've been trailing me all night, Steve, in hopes that I had a runaway lady across my saddle-bow?" I heard that kind Meester Bob make question of one of the tall men who rode in the next rank behind him. Then they at once passed by the place of my refuge and I was left alone in the terrible night, only that the

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

good Shep dog did run to my blanket, but was called away by Meester Bob, as he went away from me down the road to the house that was shelter for those men while I lay out in the storm.

And then in a few minutes of time down came the dreadful rain that beat upon the rock that sheltered me and came in a so great torrent through the bushes about me on to the blanket with which I am covered. And again I wept for fright and sorrow that I am like a hunted animal that is forced to lie under rocks and bushes in hiding because I must be true to beautiful Belgium that is slain. I wept for myself out there alone, and that kind Meester Bob had been by force obliged to leave me in the storm while he is at this moment in the shelter of that good Steve and that good Mamie. And as I wept alone, I do not know how long, suddenly I felt the nose of my good friend Shep dog come under my blanket and I clasped my arms around her wet neck in a gratefulness that a dog had come back to me in the storm.

"Child—" then came a nice, warm voice in the cold darkness, and I also clasped close that

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

Meester Bob's warm hand that was hunting for me with a great caution.

"I am alive, but I weep," I said, creeping up from the blanket to beside him, while he did still seek to shelter me under the blanket over my arm and shoulder.

"See here, Miss Céleste, I have got to talk fast to you and you must answer me straight out from the shoulder," then demanded that kind Meester Bob, though I did not know exactly what it was he asked of me.

"I do not know what is 'straight out from the shoulder,' but I will do it if you tell me," I made answer to him as he wrapped more closely the blanket.

"I have heard a story from the two men there in Steve's cabin, and now I want you to tell me your own. I am your sworn friend and pledged to protect and if necessary hide you, but tell me about it yourself. To protect you, perhaps from even yourself, I must know it all. Tell me!"

### III

#### I BREAK A PROMISE

"IT is my very cruel shame that I must disclose to you, good, kind Meester Bob, but now that I have you to be a friend it is not so much of a great hardness," I made reply to him, and, as I looked up with a wistfulness of desire that I might have some light to see the sweet gentleness in his face that I had felt in his warm hand and deep voice, suddenly that silver moon came forth from the dark storm and made a beautiful daylight all around and about us in that great forest that is so wonderful now that Meester Bob is come and I am not longer alone.

"You can tell me anything, child, and I think I'll understand," he answered to me as he made me to stand close against that big rock on the side not toward the house of that Mamie



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

and that Steve, and he held my one cold hand in his two that were very warm.

"The shame and the dishonor is to my uncle Dyreck in that house with the lights; and I am in the storm. He is the head of the house of Berseck and of Krymn since my father and my brother have been shot at Louvain, and I am most helpless in his power. I have a great fear."

"I'm here, little girl. Go on!" answered that friend, Meester Bob, while I did cling to his two kind hands.

"It is the Emperor who has promised him great lands and titles and much military honor and gold if he gives me in marriage to this nice, kind Louis Augustus, so that a great lady of Belgium may become a German to be mother of many children for a tie to make Belgium one with Germany. I have a horror!" And again I clung more closely to the arm of Meester Bob, which is of a great wetness with rain.

"Don't you like Augustus enough? He seems rather kind. Would it be so bad? Think, Céleste!" And as he spoke that Meester Bob gave me back my hand from his arm and leaned against a tall tree at more of a distance.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"Monsieur, it is not that I do not like well that kind young prince, but it is that I am sold to that Emperor while my father is dead before the great guns, and Dyreck, my brother, also. It is dishonor to the house of Krymn for always. As she died, my mother has said it to my dear Mees Jane Forsythe in Devonshire:

"'Take her to America with you, Jane, and make her and her children free. Never, never let them make of her a bond for Germany and Belgium. Swear to me.' That is what my beautiful English mother said for her last words to her loved Mees Jane. And my Mees Jane made the vow to her then, and again on the grave of my mother in the night that we fled to America."

"How did the count happen to be with you? He says that he was traveling with you to restore your shocked nerves and that your insane governess threw you off the train and that you are wandering and waiting for him to find you. He has a good tale ready, the old fox. I could have choked him from instinct at the sight of his evil face while I stood and smiled and listened." And that good Meester Bob grew

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

very fierce at my enemy in defense of me. That gave me great courage to continue my history.

"He did not say true, good Meester Bob," I made answer, standing as tall and quiet as is possible to me there in that kind moonlight that must show truth on my face. "He had made discovery of my flight with my dear Mees Jane Forsythe, and he was on that terrible great ship when we came up to deck out from Liverpool. Also he had with him that poor and very lovely Louis Augustus, who must obey his Emperor and seek me in marriage, though much insulted every day by my dear Mees Jane and me also, when in her presence or that of my wicked uncle Dyreck, but not when we are alone, because I do so pity him."

"Are you sure, then, that you can't do as they all wish and make it up with nice Augustus?" asked that Meester Bob of me, and I see that he has a look of great graveness on his so lovely face for me. "It would be a great destiny, child, in your own world. Do you realize what it means to live in a strange land with people who have strange customs, away from your own?"

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"Have I not found you in America, Meester Bob? And have you not any more a care for me, now that I tell you that I am sought to my dishonor?" I pleaded to him with my hands stretched out to touch him.

"Oh, you child, you child! What's a man to do? That old wretch back there *is* the devil incarnate, and how do I know what wickedness he plans, with you as a pawn?" and that Meester Bob's face is broken into emotion as he holds my hands in his.

"You have the trust of my heart, good Meester Bob, and you have promised that you hide me deep. You have taken my knife to that condition and have made a vow to me. It is not long that I must be a care to you, for I can find dear Mabel in the country of Chicago and my Mees Jane in that Texas. Please help me and hide me!" In that light of the moon I looked into his eyes through my tears and entreated with them to him.

"I may be wrong, but, by Heaven! I'll deliver you to that Miss Forsythe of yours and let her decide what is to be done. I can't turn you over to that old scoundrel here in the night

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

and in the freedom of this God's country against your will. Do you trust me fully, child?" And as he asked that question of me that good and lovely Meester Bob dropped my hands and stood so that the moon of silver shone into his face like a light from heaven.

"Monsieur, you have the entire faith and trust of Céleste de Krymn, Countess de Berseck, and she is to you your little child that you do as is best for in your great and holy kindness to her sorrow. In fealty I would kiss your hand," and I made that I would raise his large, warm hand to my tears, but instead he did that to me with a kind kiss on both my cold hands.

"God bless you, little girl, and keep you and give you the freedom for which you are making such a plucky fight, and may I serve you while you need it," was the beautiful prayer that kind Meester Bob made before he let me again have my hands.

"And now for a plan to get you out of this forest and on the way to your Miss Jane to have the whole matter settled under her wing! I hereby make solemn promise that only to

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

her will I deliver you, so I must get busy with my wits."

"I am not sure what is that 'get busy with my wits,' but I can do also what you tell to me," I made answer to him, with a great eagerness.

And when I made the same nice American remark as he had done, that Meester Bob laughed with a great heartiness, but very softly. I again came much closer to him, for it was so pleasant to me to hear a laugh in all the storm and dark and horror of night.

"Tell me what it is I do," I said, in also a whispered softness.

"You stay right here, Lady of Honey, under this rock until I can come back for you. I must go in and lead them all astray over Paradise Ridge before I can get away from them. I have a feeling that his Satanic Majesty suspects me already. They are only waiting for the storm to clear completely away to start the search again. I will give them the slip and come back just as soon as I can, but you must lie here in hiding until I do come. I can't even leave Shep with you."

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"I will do as you tell, kind Meester Bob, though I am alone many hours and a day. I know that you will find me," I made answer to him, though my hands would cling to his sleeve even while I did not want that they should.

"You'll be good and happy and not cry, little girl? Promise me?" And it is with such a sweetness that he asked me that question that I did begin to sob and laugh and laugh and sob while I made promise that I would not do so.

Then he held my two hands for one moment more in great kindness and then went into the moonlight on the road to the house of that Steve and that Mamie. That good Shep dog did run back for one last embrace, but must answer the whistle of Meester Bob to come with him.

Then for a very long time I sat in that black hole in the rock and made not so much as one peep from among the bushes. I did not weep, because I had given my promise not to do so, and also I was so very tired that I bethought me to take a long sleep while I knew that my kind Meester Bob would not let any harm come to find me. And while I am asleep suddenly I am

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

awake; and I then heard horses and the voices of men loud in the daylight that I found with my opened eyes. It was my wicked uncle Dyreck and the nice Louis Augustus and his two gentlemen and the secretary and three officers, also a man that I think is that Steve and my kind friend, Meester Bob, on that Goodboy horse, with the Shep dog running beside who passed near by me. I crouched back and for a little moment I am in fright until I remembered the prayer of that Meester Bob to my good God in America, which is free.

"No, Céleste, who is now called an American name of honey, which is nice, you are in the care of Meester Bob and have promised that you will be brave, which is not to weep. Sleep once again!" I counseled to myself. And again I did sleep long into the daylight this once more.

And while I am asleep I dreamed of that good pone bread and that sweet bacon on the two-end stick, and I then woke in such a hunger that I am almost in despair.

"What is it that I can do?" I asked to myself, for I had not before in my life been so far and long absent from food.



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

And while I asked that question of myself I thought that the answer came. From behind that rock I heard a noise in the house of Steve and of Mamie, and I looked forth from the bushes with a great caution. I found that a woman, who I felt must be that Mamie, was coming from the little house, which was like that of a peasant and very pretty with sweet flowers and a vine of green; and behind her she made fast the door with a key which she hung under a vine that ascended over that door. I watched with great interest what she would do, and I was sad when she went with a great slowness down the wide road, for thus much more I was again alone.

And when a great hunger and a great loneliness are both present in a person each is much the greater. Also I had become now very wet and chill through my dress and my shoes, and I had what is called a shiver over me.

"Céleste, who is called the nice honey name, you gave a promise to that kind Meester Bob that you would stay in the cold rock for an hour and a day," I made reply to myself when I begged myself to go with that key in that

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

house to warm by the nice fire that smoked from the chimney and maybe find a very small piece of that pone bread which is not to be used by any person and for which I could leave some gold on the plate after eating.

"Meester Bob would grieve that I starved," I also made another argument to myself, which I immediately believed. "It is well that I go and find food and warmth for myself." And I then crept forth along the road and into the gate. And each moment I must stop and must listen.

First, before I had put my one foot on the threshold to reach for the key, a great commotion arrived from the rear of the hut and I am very much frightened when I behold that it is a large swine. I immediately mounted on to a chair that had one very much broken leg to it and which caused it to rock with much danger to me had I not clung to the door where I was to obtain the key.

"Go hence!" I commanded the large red swine, and with a great politeness he obeyed my command and retired, with two hen chickens in his company.

"It is in America that even the large swine

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

are kind and polite to poor me," I told myself as I procured the key and entered the door of that Steve and that Mamie.

And what did I find? I at that time thought it to be a captive of much cruelty, but I now know it to be a necessary custom for that Mamie to tie up her offspring to the end of the bed in that fashion when it is not of sufficient strength to walk with her when she goes on a necessary journey. It was in truth a very sad thing to me to see that very small little boy gnaw at the rope, as would a dog, to obtain his freedom and make little sobs in his throat at the same time.

"Don't cry, little boy," I said to him in much the same tone of kindness that that Meester Bob did use to me on his discovery of me in the forest by the railroad. Nice kindnesses are treasures that may be saved and given again to another in need.

"Damn this old rope," answered that small child in what I knew to be a great profanity, but he held up his leash to me in such entreaty that I immediately knelt beside him and attempted his release. It was impossible, for that

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

mother had made the knot with much firmness in a way which I could not discover.

"Get a knife, girl, please ma'am," he advised me and pointed to a rude table underneath the window. I flew to obey him, and I came very near a faintness when I saw that upon that table was a large piece of that pone bread and other food. His release was immediate with the knife, and he also had a great hunger, so we together did sit down to that table.

And as we did I regarded my very young host and he regarded me also. His eyes were very large and very blue, and he was of the pinkness of a rose on his cheeks and of a red rose as to his mouth. I had not before been so alone with a very small little boy, and I did not know what it was that I should say to him, but he remarked first to me, with a very sweet kindness.

"Your clothes is mighty wet, girl," he said, with what seemed a beautiful solicitude from one so young. "Don't you want another dress?" and he pointed to a rude frock of a blue homespun that hung upon a nail in the wall.

As I had then by that time consumed two of the pone breads with a kind of thick sweet-

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

ness which that boy had directed me to pour from an earthen jug, I had a few moments in which to feel that I was very wet and very chill.

"Thank you, kind sir, I will put on the dress while I make dry my own," I made answer to him, with gratitude.

"I'm named Bill, not 'kind sir,' and I'll make a big fire for you to git dry by. That's the reason maw ties me up, the fire and that dynamite there in the corner. I'm no baby; I'm going on six next year, and I'm going to burn up this old rope."

Is it only in America that small children speak with such tones of manhood as did that Bill and work with such speed as was used by him in making burn very high that fire with dry sticks upon the rough hearth of great primitiveness? I do not know children in any way, but I did and do still believe this Bill to be one of great remark. And as he labored I removed my dress and substituted the crude peasant garb of that Mamie who was the mother of that Bill. It was of such a nice warmth and dryness that I was completely happy as I disposed my own clothing on a chair

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

near to the blaze which that Bill attended in burning that cruel rope with a greatness of delight. Even with dry shoes of a strange bigness and coarseness I provided myself by the direction of that Bill, and then I sat me down beside him in a great comfort on a low chair.

"What's that?" that Bill remarked, with a suddenness, as a noise of thunder and a great lightning came at one time together in through the window of the hut.

"Again it will rain and I must run to get the blanket of Meester Bob behind that rock, so that it may dry also for the so gentle Goodboy horse," I remarked to Bill to excuse myself while I went out rapidly to the road.

"I ain't afraid of no old lightning, but I'll go with you to keep it from hurting you," said that kind small Bill as he ran along very close to those homespun mother skirts that appaeled me, down the wide road in what I held to be the direction of my refuge rock, but with a mistake.

For a number of minutes that small Bill and myself walked on, and I made diligent search back in the forest for that rock with

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

bushes surrounded until I discovered I am on a hill and much too far from that hut of Steve and of Mamie, in a lost way.

"It is in the wrong direction and we must turn, small Bill," I made remark to him as he now held my hand in his and came much closer with each lightning and each thunder. Also a great and terrifying storm darkness had come down upon us from clouds near to the earth, which gave forth fire.

Then as I spoke and looked down the hill at the home of that small Bill by my side, a terrible thing occurred, and again I am back in Belgium with the big guns. A great fire shell burst through the sky and dropped down on that poor small house which made it to rise up high in the air with a detonation that shook me and that small Bill down to the earth.

"It's the dynamite. Run, run before it gits the two kegs in the shed!" cried that poor small Bill. And we began to run into the black forest as fast as is possible to us, but not before I had observed a large portion of the so polite nice red swine rise in the air and fall back beside the flames of the house.

## IV

### "SMALL BILL" TO THE RESCUE

I DO not know how long it is that the small Bill and I ran away into the forest while the trees tossed and swayed above us in the wind and the lightning and thunder threatened us, but at last we came to another rock that is as great as the one under which Meester Bob had left me, and into its shelter I crawled me with Bill.

"Oh, mon Dieu!" I groaned to myself, "why did I ever leave the place at which that kind Meester Bob put me to stay by a promise!" Then of a sudden a thought came to me that if I had not gone to untie with a knife that small Bill, it would be with him even so as with the kind swine—in pieces.

"Oh, little Bill, very small Bill," I cried out to him, and with my arms I clasped him to my



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

breast, the first little child that is ever so held by me.

And that Bill for a long moment pressed very close to me also, and I felt his very small warm body to tremble and maybe a tear damp on my cheek, but immediately he was not so and had withdrawn from my embrace.

"Go 'way, girl; I'm not afraid. I'll take keer of you, and I've got matches in my pocket if it gets dark," he said in a voice of great manliness, and did scratch one of those illuminators, which are called matches in America, on the under side of the rock for very pleasure to see it burn. I now saw still more good reason in the kind Mamie mother for that rope when it is not possible that small Bill can go beside her to the distance which she must travel.

Also I thought that small Bill had not much heart for the good swine that is his family friend and also the chickens which made feathers in the air when the home was exploded, but I find that the heart of even so small a man is not to be read in entirety by a woman at times when they must control weeping.

"That was a good red pig," remarked that

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

small Bill, and he turned himself so that I could not regard him and lighted another match for his comforting. I very greatly longed to again embrace him in his sorrow, but he had given me a respect for him not to so do, and I restrained myself to question him instead.

"Where do you think we must now go, small Bill?" I made demand of him. "Is it possible to find the path of returning?"

"I'm not going back to no dynamite that maybe hasn't busted. I'm going over north to Granny White's where my mother is at. We can get there in maybe just one day and a night if you can walk as fast as me," answered that small Bill in a manner of very great firmness.

"How is it that you know where is that north, my Bill?" I asked him with becoming meekness, for it is that I am lost and that Bill is so sure that it is not so with him.

"Moss on the trees and the sun when it comes out. Mister Bob learns me when I ride with him on Goodboy sometimes."

"Oh, is it that you are friends also to my good, kind Meester Bob, small Bill?" I asked, with a great fervor, and this time I felt that I must

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

take just one caress of that small hand on the rock beside me.

"I mean Mister Bob Lawrence, but he ain't your man. He ain't married, though maybe he would if you asked him. You are a mighty pretty girl." And that Bill he looked at me with a great—great what you call judiciousness in his eyes of blue heaven.

I am greatly embarrassed and I blushed exceedingly, not knowing what to make answer to that compliment of small Bill, when of a sudden, just at the same time of the blush, the sun thrust to right and to left the dark clouds and made the forest lovely with light all around and about that shelter rock.

"Come on, let's get to Granny's maybe 'fore dark," that small Bill urged me, and immediately we set forth.

In all the life that is now to come to me in the future I must ever remember that journey through the large forest of Meester Bob with that small Bill, who is yet no more than a babe, to guide me. It is the month of October and each tree is of a redness or a more brilliant hue than is gold, and on the ground is spread for

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

our progression a carpet of leaves more beautiful than the long one that is laid down in the great hall at my lost Krymnwolde when the loved King Albert and the also loved Elizabeth come for the visits of state to my father and to my mother. And on each and every side there are more of the tall forest flowers that I now know are the national goldenrod, with the bushes beside strung with garnet berries of a very great richness. The moss on the sides of the very large rocks and tall trees, by which that small Bill is leading us to friends, is an incrustation of emeralds of an extreme richness. I am lost, alone in that woods with only that small Bill to make me a way, but so much there is of beauty that I feel a great happiness.

So on we go over the beautiful leaf carpet that at times ends on the banks of shallow streams over which that small Bill and I must cross on stones from which we well-nigh slip into the water. And at last there comes the time that the shadows grow longer and the birds over our heads are beginning to nest themselves in the trees. I had a very great fatigue, and it is the same with that Bill,

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

though he continually went forward to look for some sign of that Granny White's habitation and did each time return with disappointment.

"I must rest me now for just one little while, small Bill," I besought him, with a great pleading.

"All right; you're a girl," he made answer to me with a greatness of condescension as he sank on the low great rock beside me at the edge of a stream much larger than those we had before crossed. My own feet were of a very great weariness, but as I looked at the very small ones of that Bill upon which were no shoes and many scratches my heart was of a so great tenderness that I would have caressed the yellow head of him with my hand, but refrained for the respect that he has made me feel of him without words between us.

"Is it that you have a very great hunger, small Bill?" I asked of him in friendliness as some variety of a large night bird made something of a noise in the branches of the tree above our heads and we moved to a greater closeness one to the other. I do not know the

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

reason for it, but ever since that moment I have broken the corn-pone bread with that Meester Bob in this his great woods I have continued thoughts of food. Is it that such a continuous desire is created in me by the danger of an absence of food or is it the air of such rich fragrance that I breathe into my body? I think it must be for both reasons.

"You can eat this, girl. I ain't hungry," answered that small Bill as he drew forth from his pocket one piece of that pone bread only about so large as his own small hand. It is that very great and fine gentlemen are born in the forests of America and when very young are habited in coarse clothing of blue without shoes. I accepted the half of the food from that small Bill because of his knightliness, and after the eating we both did suffer hunger the more.

And as the shadows came up out of the large blackness and rested nearer about us, that Bill and I crept close to each other on the cold rock.

"Will you not make us one fire, small Bill?" I questioned a suggestion because I knew of what a great fascination was a flame to him, and also I feared the cold through that small

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

blue shirt with the large rents in back and front and on the right sleeve.

"While it was light I wish I had dugged some fishing-worms to cook," remarked that small Bill to me when the fire was of a great warmth and brightness. I did know that word "worm," and it made me shudder at it suggested for food, but I dissembled my feelings to that small Bill.

And the time it was very long that small Bill and I sat by that fire in the darkness. And at that time I had no fright, for that small Bill did come very close to me now and it was much comfort and happiness that I was allowed to place my arm about his so small shoulders.

"I ain't afraid, and if you want to go to sleep I'll keep care of you," he made remark to me just one minute before his yellow-haired head fell on to my breast in deep sleep. I then did adjust him into my arms and myself against the great rock to watch through the long night until the light should come.

And I do not know why it is, but I do no longer weep or am afraid. I keep in my heart

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

the two things that the good, kind Meester Bob has said to me, "God bless you, little girl!" and also that promise, "I'll come back for you," and I hold on my breast that head of the so small American child I have saved by the will of the good God from the terrible dynamite.

"Céleste de Berseck, you now wear American clothes and you cradle an American child and you await—" But just as I spoke those words very softly to myself, so that I should not disturb that small and so very tired Bill in my arms, there is a crash in the bushes across the stream, and I clasped very close that Bill and said a very quick prayer to the good God that no harm come to him in his sleep.

I waited and that Bill slept, even so close as I held him.

A crash came from a greater nearness and a most terrifying animal noise. I then crouched my body over that small Bill so that I might first be devoured; and again I waited.

A loud splash then came from the stream and a bark that entered into the deepness of my heart, for I then know the animal to be my good friend that Shep dog. We embraced and



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

it awakened that small Bill, whom my Shep did lick with a greatness of loving.

"Gee! what you got around your neck, Shep?" asked that small Bill while yet in the embrace of the good Shep dog.

We then made the discovery of a large parcel well fastened around the neck of that Shep dog. It is with great eagerness that I make the fastenings alose while that Bill has made more light with a stick on the fire. At the very first I discover a writing, and I leave the further opening of the package to that small Bill while I read:

Miss Céleste, stay just where you are; give Shep this glove of mine to smell, and say, 'Go, girl, find him!' She will come back and bring me to you no matter where she finds you. Wait for me!

BOB LAWRENCE.

I clasped that letter to my cheek for joy that it will be so soon that my Meester Bob will come to find me. It is written on a small piece of paper of a great soiledness, but it is the best loved letter that I have ever received, and I was in the act of placing it to my lips when that small Bill spoke.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"I'm hungrier for breakfast than I was for supper, girl, and, please, ma'am, let's eat." Behold, there was unwrapped from the parcel on the neck of that good Shep dog much of that good pone bread and also bacon in many pieces!

"Always it is that kind Meester Bob thinks to feed me," I say in my heart while I eat but one bite before I give a nice piece to that good Shep dog and then more. Also that small Bill did eat with great joy and rapidness.

Then it was while the small Bill and the good Shep dog are making complete the finish to the supper that I took from the rock the glove of that good, kind Meester Bob and in the shadow turned my face so that I might lay my cheek upon it before delivering it to the Shep dog by which to obtain scent. In all that great woods was a warmness now that I knew my Meester Bob was to come to me quickly, and I did not weep for joy upon that glove only because of my promise to him. Then I delivered the glove to the good Shep dog with the words my Meester Bob, which is her master, had written to me:

"Go, girl, find him!"

For one moment that very good and intelli-

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

gent dog looked in my eyes, then she sniffed the glove of that Meester Bob one, two, three times, and was away across the stream and into the woods before it was possible for me or that small Bill to say one word.

I did much desire that I had a piece of paper and one small pencil that I might have written a message of greeting to that good, kind Meester Bob and also gratitude for the delicious thought of his for our food, but my purse is exploded in the pocket of my blue silk dress into the air with the polite red swine, and the leather bag with the jewels is still under the great rock in company with the blanket of my friend, Good-boy horse. And one little thought then came to my mind that it may be that all of my fortune, which is the Krymn jewels, is lost to me forever in this great forest of kind Meester Bob. Perhaps it is that I am destitute, and what shall I do for myself? A little fear is beginning in my heart when that small Bill crept under the folds of that mother skirt of the good Mamie, which I wore, for warmth to his cold small legs and torn shirt, and gave to me a beautiful invitation for my future life.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"You can live in my house, girl, when my dad builds another one, and can stay with me so maw won't tie me when she has to go to the cross-roads to get groceries, can't you? You can sleep in my bed 'tween me and the wall." And as he spoke again the yellow head sank upon my breast.

"And pray, Céleste, who is now called the child of honey, what are jewels in America when so much affection is everywhere about you?" I asked of myself as sleep once more came to me.

And then in the early dawn of the morning I am again awake while in my ears is a music that seems to come from the call of a horse's voice that is mingled with the song of early birds that flit to one another in the trees over the heads of sleeping small Bill and me. A most beautiful whiteness of mist is all over the forest of red and gold and green and purple, like the lace which is often laid over the embroideries upon the gowns that my beautiful mother wore when at court and that made me so long for age that I might clothe myself likewise. Instead I am in the rough homespun of

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

that Mamie, but I am listening for the most kind and beautiful gentleman in all the world to come to me and that small Bill.

And it is in that moment, when the light of the sun did pierce the lace like a jeweled pin, that nice Goodboy horse arrived close beside the large cold rock which was the seat of small Bill and me.

Quickly I did rise, and with me lifted small Bill in my embrace, and did start toward that kind Meester Bob, but did stop when I saw the great paleness and emotion on the face of him. Do I not know suffering now that I have seen it on the faces of soldiers who have lost a great battle and on the faces of the women of Belgium who await to know if the big guns have taken from them their all? What had come with so great suffering to that good and kind man?

That small Bill was lost in the embrace of the good Shep dog, and alone I stood and looked into the deep and lovely eyes of the great gentleman in whose forest I had sought refuge, and who is the most kind friend that *le bon Dieu* has ever given to me, with a wait-

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

ing that he should speak to me and tell me what it is the pain in his strong face.

Then of a sudden the ray of jeweled sun through the trees laid itself across his red-gold head and its light is in his face with a great glow.

"Céleste, Céleste?" he asked of me with a great softness and a great uncertain wonder in his strong voice which had also emotion as well as kindness in it. And he came to me with his hands held out to me, and when I did give mine into his keeping he bent and buried his eyes in them with a still greater emotion.

"What is it, my good, kind Meester Bob?" I asked of him as I drew very close to that red-and-gold head bent to my hands.

## V

### THE HOUSE OF GRANNY WHITE

“MY God, child, I saw you a hundred yards back in Mamie’s frock with the child in your arms, and I was afraid—afraid that the scraps of blue silk had told the truth, which I was unwilling to believe when I sent Shep out into the woods to hunt for you. I must shake you for being alive,” and that is the thing that my good Meester Bob did to me with great vigor while he laughed with me as I held to his very strong arm.

“And also that poor polite red swine,” I then said, with regret in my voice, while that small Bill had drawn close, still in the embrace of the Shep dog.

“Well, where did the countess pick you up, Bill?” then asked Meester Bob, and again that awful fear shot through his eyes.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"I just comed along to take keer of her away from the dynamite," that small Bill made answer as he again began to roll upon the ground with the Shep dog.

"I did break faith with you, good Meester Bob," I made answer further, with a closer clinging to his strong, fine arm. "On account of hunger and wet and cold I entered the house of that good Mamie in her absence, and did make a release of small Bill from a rope to the bed while I also did clothe myself in dryness of clothes and eat of the pone bread and sweetness from the jug. And then it happened—"

"We went to git your horse-blanket up the road where we couldn't find it and then—boom—boom went the dynamite up in the air, with that red pig and the chickens and the coffee-pot and the girl's dress and two pillows and the checked quilt and— It was a big lightning and that was a good old pig," interrupted me that small Bill, who then paused with emotion for the poor swine in his young face and voice.

"You precious babes in the woods," then did exclaim that good Meester Bob while he for a very short moment did embrace both that small



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

Bill and me, which was resented by that Bill and ended before I wished greatly that it should.

"When I turned the bend in the road, after having found you gone, leaving the blanket and the leather bag behind you, and saw the smoking ruins of Steve's house with the awful—awful odor of burned flesh—and—and—found a few scraps of the blue of your frock all charred—I—I— Here, honey lady, let me shake you again!" And again that poor Meester Bob laid his big warm hands on my shoulders and did give to me another good shake of deep emotion.

"You let her alone. She 'ain't done nothing bad," then said that small Bill, coming close to me and seeking with his very small strength to draw away the hands of that strong Meester Bob from my shoulders.

"Where had your mother gone, Bill?" asked that Meester Bob of a great suddenness and distress. "What could Mamie have thought when she got back to that ruin?" And I saw that paleness of emotion come back to that good, kind face of Meester Bob with a great suddenness.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"She wasn't coming back," answered that small Bill as he offered a branch of very green tenderness to the nice Goodboy horse to eat. "She went over to Granny White's 'cause she was sick, and dad was going to fetch me when he came home. I was taking my girl over there."

"Then we must try to beat the news of the explosion to Mamie at Granny White's," said that Meester Bob as he then began to make prepared the back of the fine Goodboy horse that I should ride once more in my rocking-chair as he has spoken of it before. "Steve is still over Paradise Ridge with—with your family party, honey lady, hunting for you, and when he gets back he will have to stand the shock of what he finds until he learns better. I left him to guide the hunt because I could trust him to guide them in the direction I laid down for them. And Granny White's was the shelter I was taking you to so as to leave you comfortable until I could get you to the railroad station over at Providence and started on to your Miss Jane; so come, let me put you up for another fifteen miles on Goodboy. Did you expect to make it

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

on foot to-day, Bill?" he asked as he swung himself up on that nice good horse, Goodboy, and reached down to help me up from his foot to the seat of great comfort behind him that I do so like.

"She couldn't walk fast; she's a girl," answered that small Bill as he held up his hands and was in his turn lifted to the front of the saddle on that fine Goodboy horse who is very generous that he carries so many persons at one time.

"Hold tight!" commanded that Meester Bob, and again I am riding rapidly in the forest, clinging close to his good, kind strength and very happy with a warm confidence in his care of me.

Of a sudden one of his very strong arms is reached around and laid across my shoulders for just a very small moment and his cheek is turned so that it might have rested on my hair for another small inch, and I heard him say as if not to me, but himself:

"I *have* got you safe, haven't I, little girl?"

"Yes," I made answer to him, likewise almost in the depth of my heart that beat very nicely against his back as we went down into a small

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

stream in the manner of yesterday and up the bank, while that small Bill did trail a branch of a tree in the water and then besprinkle both Meester Bob and me as also the strong Goodboy horse. It was so nice to have a large laugh with two companions in that forest while Meester Bob did hold that small Bill by one of his legs and let him almost down into the water for the wetness of his head.

Céleste, who is called now the nice honey name," I said to myself, this time with such a great softness that I am sure it is not possible to that kind Meester Bob to hear, "is it a bird with wings that is your heart from such a happiness?" And it is that I am sure Meester Bob did not hear the words that I spoke, but, behold! he again turned his cheek and the inch from my hair is this time but a fraction. If I should come closer to him my head would rest somewhat higher against the back of his broad shoulder and nearer his cheek, but I have not quite that largeness of courage.

"I'm hungry," then said that small Bill, to whom is there immediately an answer from within myself of like feeling.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

Then it is that Meester Bob did halt nice Goodboy and made a great banquet for the small Bill and the good Shep dog and Goodboy horse and me, also himself last.

And now again I ask myself why is it that I have always here in this forest of Meester Bob such a terribleness of great hunger. I cannot sit with good conduct and watch that bacon and that pone bread cook to a fine brownness, but I must eat all the many small bits that become brown first and which that sympathetic man did break from all the edges and hand almost into my mouth from their hotness.

"You *are* a kid," remarked that Meester Bob to me as I swallowed with a great quickness a very small thinness of potato and made immediately open my mouth for a crispness of bacon that I see is ready in what I now know to call a fry-pan.

"That girl is just like a baby bird with a daddy bird a-feeding it," thereupon remarked small Bill as he also put into my mouth a crispness from the first pone bread that Meester Bob had given to him. And again it was that we enjoyed a nice laugh.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"That ugly old man wouldn't eat maw's corn-bread in our house. Would he, Mister Bob?" asked that small Bill in the very center of my laughing happiness and made me to again have fear and hate of my uncle Dyreck de Berseck.

"Nice Augustus did pretty well by his part of the corn-pone," said Meester Bob, and he did not look at me while he gave me a large piece of pone with much bacon hot between. "Perhaps you'll have to learn to make this Tennessee national dish, Miss Céleste."

And I make a question to myself why I should become so angry when good Meester Bob spoke so to me of that poor young Prince Louis Augustus, who was seeking me lost in a forest, that I threw down upon a rock a great piece of the entirely good pone bread, for which I was so empty, and did walk away into the forest as tall and as stately as is possible to me.

And did that kind Meester Bob follow after me immediately? He did not. He again put upon nice Goodboy horse the blanket that is for my rocking-chair while that small Bill assisted in the repast of the good Shep dog by offering to her bits of the food, like he had observed that

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

Meester Bob do to me. It was possible to me to see, with not a perceptible turning of the head, when that Meester Bob mounted upon the Goodboy horse and did lift small Bill up on the place against the strongness of his shoulders that is mine. Suddenly I felt that I was alone in that great forest, through which a cold wind was now blowing, and also alone in the great world, with all that loved me dead across the ocean in which are the terrible mines of explosion, with a wicked uncle not so far away. Tears rose from the place in the bottom of my heart, where I did discover not so long ago in Belgium that I possessed a lake of them, and so flooded my eyes that I was blind and reached out to lay my hand on a tree so that I should not fall. I was desolate; but for only a very small moment, for beside me was the Goodboy horse and in two arms of such great strength as I had never known to exist I was lifted to the place of that small Bill on the front of the saddle, while the warm lips of that kind Meester Bob did whisper in my ear, very close:

“Forgive me, dear!”

“Please, yes,” was the answer I made in such

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

contentment that I did not care that the wetness from my eyes did make damp his cheek that was not then even that whole fraction of the inch away.

"I'm letting you ride in front just a little way, girl," then did small Bill make remark to me from down in my rocking-chair place on the back part of the nice Goodboy horse.

And that Meester Bob did laugh with a great merriment as he allowed me to take the reins of the bridle to that nice Goodboy and guide him on through the trees while he made me secure against the strength of his arm.

And it was the time for the setting of the sun as we did ride toward its golden hue through the trees, that were not of such a thickness now. I was of such a happiness that it was impossible for me to prevent that I looked at each moment into the kind Irish eyes back of the blackness of their lashes that smiled to me each time in answer.

"You child, you little, little child!" once that Meester Bob's lips said to me with the softness of his eyes in smiling, but his cheek was not at all near to mine and immediately his mouth



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

assumed a great strongness. "I wonder just where in Texas the tracer will find your kind Miss Jane," he remarked as if to himself and not at all to me.

"I do not care," I answered to him with a most unjust indifference in my heart to that loving Mees Jane. "I do only care that—"

"There's the chimley of Granny White's; there it is!" at this beautiful moment interrupted small Bill. "Git up, Goodboy!" And immediately that kind horse commenced a great hurry forward.

"Wait a minute, Bill! Whoa, Goodboy!" said that Meester Bob as he laid his large and nice hand over mine and drew the Goodboy horse up to stop.

"I'm going to leave you here again behind this rock in another nest of buck-bushes, Miss Céleste, and for the love of Heaven stay until I see just who is there and just who has been there." And with which words that good Meester Bob put me from his arms and the back of the Goodboy horse on to the ground.

"I will be of a very great goodness, kind Meester Bob, and stay in hiding for you," I

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

answered as I looked up into those eyes of so great loving beauty that looked down into mine at the same small moment.

"I'll stay with you, girl. I can wait to see my mother," then said that small Bill as he also looked down affection into my eyes from his that had in them also a very great mother eagerness.

"No, Bill, old man, I'd rather tell Mamie about the loss of the house with you found in her sight," quickly said that good Meester Bob with a so lovely mother comprehension in his voice that tears arose in my throat and in defiance of his dignity I did for a small moment clasp to my breast one very soiled and scratched foot of small Bill that hung from Goodboy horse near to me.

"No tears, honey lady, until I come?" then did that kind Meester Bob lean down and ask of me while small Bill quickly withdrew from my humble embrace.

"Yes, please, sir," I made answer to him as he started that Goodboy horse rapidly toward the house away to the left beside a broad road that did wind in and out of the great trees. I

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

now know that road to be called Providence Road, and it is made from the path by which, in the time of Indians, many fine people came from all nations to build the great State of Tennessee, America. At that time I had not heard of its significance, but as I looked forth from the bushes to see the long white curve go over a tall hill I did sing to myself, I knew not why:

“‘It is a long, long way to Tipperary.’

“And it has led you from darkness and weeping into some peace and light, Céleste de Krymn,” I did further assure myself as I looked forth to that abode of Granny White into which my good Meester Bob and my beloved small Bill had disappeared through a door that is covered over with a vine of a great thickness of small white flowers that had a fragrance which did penetrate across that Providence Road to my breath.

“It is not the house of a peasant, is this abode of Granny White, and it is not also the residence of a landed proprietor, but it is a most lovely home in which to live,” I did think to myself from behind that safe rock. It

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

is not tall, but is low and has many rooms that give the impression of white wings stretched out to shelter many children, and very large chimneys of rude rock smoke with a great warmth and pleasantness, while over many windows is that very sweet vine and also one of a crimson-and-gold hue of the autumn. It made a very pleasant smile for me to see a nice white chicken go and look with a great caution into the wide door and then softly enter, while it was with emotion that I beheld a red swine come from the rear of the house and regard the entrance of the hen into the door with a great longing.

And then suddenly I had a very nice laugh with myself when I did behold that small Bill come and make a great play with the swine while they both disappeared to the rear of the house. At the same time forth came the chicken in great perturbation.

"Céleste de Krymn," I then said to myself, "it will be a great happiness to you when you go with your kind Meester Bob into that nice house to rest in a bed and be clean again and also at home. He will come for you almost immediately now."

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

Then as I spoke to myself in this fashion of great contentment suddenly a woman's cry, which I do not know is of joy or pain, is heard and with it came a small wail that did pierce to the very heart of me and give me a greatness of fear which I did not comprehend.

"What is it?" I asked of myself, and I did start to my feet to go to that wailing, but instantly did remember my promise to that good Meester Bob to stay in hiding until he could arrive back for me. I must wait, in all honor.

And again there came to my listening heart that very feeble cry which was like that of a small little child.

"I must go to find a woman and a child that have perhaps need of me," I answered to that myself who did hold me back by that promise to kind Meester Bob. "I must go!" And with that answer I did start from my hiding-place in the direction of that Granny White house and with a great rapidity I did cross the road to the little white gate with some of the sweet vine beside it.

## VI

### "THE LITTLE HUMAN"

AND behold it happened that at that moment my kind Meester Bob is coming out to me with as great a rapidity. He is in a very great perturbation and one of those locks of red-and-gold hair is very rampant over his head, also his eyes have a so great an embarrassment, as it is called, that it was impossible for me to make that they meet with mine.

"Little girl," he said to me from his side of the gate as we made a pause near to each other, "that express train dropped you off into the Harpeth Valley woods and also into—into a bit of real life. There's a woman in there who needs the woman that I am sure is in your sweet heart. Go to her and God bless you both! Call me if you need me; I'll be in the barn with

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

Bill, where men folks belong under such circumstances." And before I can make a question or an answer he has followed in the path of small Bill and also the red swine, likewise the sly chicken, out of my sight.

And as I stood at that gate in front of that wide door of such a greatness of hospitality I found myself in fear. I do not know what it is that I must do and why had that kind Meester Bob left me to enter alone into the strangeness of that house. But while I did hesitate and question myself again that very small cry came to my heart and with feet of wings I ran into the house to make answer, I knew not to what, but I knew that I must go.

And what did I find? On a very white and wide bed in a corner of a large and low room was laid a woman and at her side there rested a bundle of white cloth that did wail and without ceasing.

"What is it, Madame?" I asked of her from close at her side.

"I got him here by myself and he's all right now, but I can't do any more. I'm glad you are a woman that can keep him wrapped up

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

and warm while I rest and get some sleep. I'm all right, but it has been a powerful night. He came at daylight. Call Mister Bob if you need him, and cook something for you all to eat. I've got to sleep; take him to the fire!" And with which command the poor, pale woman turned her face to the wall and slept, leaving me in a great confusion with that small bundle that did wail and wail the more.

"What is it that I shall do, Céleste?" I questioned myself as I lifted into my arms the small wail which at that moment did cease

I then turned aside a corner of the white cloth and the gray wool swathing and did behold the most peculiar creature of a very great redness, but which also was in some way strangely beautiful to me. Upon it was a coarse white garment, and it was evidently a very nice human being in a very small beginning. I immediately wrapped it with a great closeness in my arms and the gray wool, and did carry it to the very small fire in the largeness of the chimney. There was no more of that cry, but that little human did make a small noise with its mouth which I decided must be of hunger,



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

and I thereupon began to dread more of the cries which would awaken that poor fatigued mother in the white bed.

"Food must be cooked for this human, Céleste, and it is impossible to you while you must hold it in your arms away from the cries. You must summons that kind Meester Bob," I counseled myself and did immediately act thereupon. Also at mention of food I again found in myself that hunger that I did not understand. It was at that moment that Meester Bob made entrance with also small Bill.

"This child has a great hunger and cold, kind Meester Bob, and will you provide fuel sticks and maybe some corn-pone for him and me also and that small Bill as well as you?" I asked of him while I did rock myself in a low chair with that little human very close to my breast for warmth and no weeping. But at that request of mine that Meester Bob did very softly laugh as small Bill made a high fire from sticks in a box beside the chimney that I had not observed.

"Mamie felt her hour coming and hurried on over here yesterday afternoon to her mother,

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

Granny White, leaving Steve to bring Bill. She found Granny gone around by the bend to fetch her and just then the storm broke. Mamie has been here all night alone, and Granny is tied up somewhere in the bend by the flood of Little Harpeth River. Pretty plucky of her to get that young whale here all by herself in the dark of the night and the storm. Here, Bill, come and look at your young brother, who will be punching your head before the decade is out." And that kind Meester Bob drew a chair very close to the little human in my arms and lifted the woolen cloth that small Bill might see his countenance.

"He ain't as pretty as them pups that Shep found last month, is he?" asked that small Bill. At which unkindness Meester Bob did laugh with a cruelty that made me to cover close my little human and make a small singing in my throat for him, with my head held with offense as high as is possible to me.

"This is a child of great beauty," I announced to the both of those offenders. "And also of great hunger," I added, with a slight smile of propitiation as a very small animal

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

noise again issued from the throat of my little human in my arms.

"We'll make him a pot of—shall we say corn-meal gruel for his supper—er—er—*via* Mamie when she wakes," said that kind Meester Bob with a great teasingness in his smile that is cast upon me and my little human.

It was then that I did understand and remember about the feeding of the young and did blush into the wrappings of the little human while rocking it upon my breast with more of the Tipperary croonings.

"And it is about four hours since I filled up you, honey lady, and also Bill," that Meester Bob did make a great haste to say further. "I don't dare risk letting you be empty any longer; I'd never get you full. How about some scrambled eggs and that nice fryer I see Granny has put all ready to be cooked down in the milk-house?"

"I have the greatness of delight at what you say, but I do not know that word 'fryer,' although I will eat it with pleasure," I made answer with a nice smile of joy.

"'Fryer' is another word for a small chicken."

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

And go get it, Bill, while I fire up the cook-stove," answered that Meester Bob, with another laugh.

And it is that in all my future life I do not believe that there will ever come a more beautiful day than that in the house of Granny White with all those so kind friends. That Mamie is a very pretty, nice woman who is a peasant, but not exactly so, either. When she did awaken that kind Meester Bob made jokes with her and did give the nice gruel to her in a bowl that Bill did hold for her while it is consumed. And then, as the sun is beginning to fall down on to the trees up that Providence Road, sweet Marnie did call to me and ask that I bring to her the little human for his repast also.

It is with a very great reverence that I laid that small child to her full and white breast as she so directed me, and then into my eyes from that lake of Belgian tears in my heart, did great ones arise as I thought me of my own beautiful English mother who is dead in that grave in Devonshire who did once so hold poor Céleste and so nourish her. Now is her

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

child a wanderer in a great, strange land and Belgium is slain.

"What is it, child? Tell Mamie?" that kind mother asked of me, and I did drop on my knees at the side of her and the little human and weep into her strong shoulder under a nightrobe of great coarseness, but also cleanliness, that felt soft and warm to my tired head.

My story is of a great slowness in the telling, and that good Mamie did permit that I weep while I made it all so that she should understand. I only left untold to her the ascension in the lightning of her house and her quilt and her swine, and presented as a reason for wearing her frock my dampness, also an apology for the untying of that Bill.

"You are welcome to the dress, child, and to the company of Bill," that good Mamie made answer to me as she put with a beautiful kindness her hand upon my head. "And, sweetie, thank the good Lord that it was Mister Bob who picked you up in the woods. Men with a cross of the angel Gabriel on their dispositions don't grow on all the bushes in the woods of Old Harpeth."

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"It is true that he is an angel, that good, kind Meester Bob," I made answer to her, with a great readiness.

"No, just a kind of a cross-breed from one," answered that Mamie, with a little laugh, and I saw that good Meester Bob is close behind me beside the bed.

"Mamie," said that Meester Bob angel, with one of those smiles of great loveliness as he observed but did not remark upon my weeping, only that he laid a kind hand for just one little second upon my very much disordered hair, "who in all the world would you rather I should tell you is coming up the road from the bend?"

"Steve!" made reply that Mamie, with a sweetness in her face that is a very great glory as she did hold closer against her white breast the little human who is still at repast. But when she said that name "Steve" of such a joy to her the greatness of fear again came back upon me, for had not that good Meester Bob said that Steve, his retainer, was with that wicked uncle of mine and the poor young Prince Louis Augustus?

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"Meester Bob!" I made a quick exclamation and sprang up from beside that good Mamie and the very beautiful little human.

"No, child," he said to me, very quickly, and gave to me the strength of his arm to hold in my clasp. "Girls, Granny White is coming down Providence Road behind old Roan in the buggy, and everything in this house had better be stirring around before she gets here."

"Oh, mother! I *am* so glad," then made reply that good Mamie with another kind of the greatness of joy in her face. I see that for husbands women have one love and for mothers another that is as great, as it is also not the same. "Wash Bill's face quick, please, Miss Céleste," she also requested me.

"Here, come out on the back porch for the operation, honey lady, and it won't hurt you to polish up a bit yourself. There is just a trace of jam next that left dimple. Come here, Bill!" And in a very great hurry that Meester Bob did bring that small Bill to me and point out a pan of tin and a large bucket with a clean cloth hanging beside.

"Let me alone! my face ain't dirty! I washed

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

it yesterday myself," remonstrated that Bill, but kind Meester Bob held him securely while I made him very beautiful as to his rosy cheeks, not neglecting also the ears of which that Meester Bob did remind me, also the hands upon which were many stains. Then with great joy was that small Bill in possession of his freedom and running down that Providence Road to meet the oncoming of this Granny White.

"Now come here, young lady, and let me wash your face," then said that funny Meester Bob to me with a nice light of a smile in his beautiful eyes behind the blackness of the so long lashes, and in his hand he held the clean end of that large cloth upon which he had poured water. I can see that he has a great longing to tease me and cause me also to laugh, while expecting me to indignantly refuse his command. And did I refuse that command? I did not.

"Please do, good, kind, clean Meester Bob," I made answer to him, and went very close to his side to hold up my face for the wetness of the cloth. For a long moment I did not



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

know what he would do, and a nice color came up under the loveliness of those eyes, then he gave to me another of those so very nice laughs down in his throat and said:

"So you call my bluff, Lady of Honey? Well, here goes, with Heaven helping!" And he made a wash of my face with a very great niceness.

"Thank you, kind sir," I returned to him from behind that cloth. "Perhaps it is that you are not aware that much soil is upon your own countenance for the arrival of that Granny White which I hear coming near upon the road."

"Just watch me!" he responded to me, and thereupon did plunge his face and the soap together into the large pan of water with a great noise as of swimming like in Ostend.

"Beware that you make a drowning of yourself!" I admonished him, with a greatness of solicitude, while I did lend to him a part of the cloth upon which I was making dry my hands after my face.

"You are one good sport, honey child, all right," he said to me through much rubbing of his face.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"What is that 'good sport' that I am, with gratitude to you?" I made answer, and questioned him at the same moment.

"I'll tell you to-night when the moon comes up—out here under the honeysuckles," he answered to me with a great sweetness of smile as he placed again the long cloth upon the wall. "Now come watch me break the baby to Granny." And we did go forth together to the gate to welcome that so great Granny White of whom I had heard much and of whom I had then a small fear. It is not so now; and I give to her a love of the greatness of that in which I hold Mammie and that small Bill and my little human.

This is the manner in which she made entrance into my life as we arrived at the white gate with the sweet vine upon it. She had made to stop in the Providence Road a very large and very fat, also aged horse which drew behind him a vehicle of a great wideness and also great age the like of which I had not before beheld. Immediately that kind Meester Bob did go forward and assist that she dismount from that very peculiar chariot while that small

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

Bill held tight reins upon that horse who had the air that he should never move again.

"Lands alive! I am as stiff from this all-night setting-party as an old Dominicker the day she brings off a brood. Ease me down slow, Bob." And with that command the good Meester Bob, with that great strength of arm which I have felt him to possess, did assist the very large lady to stand upon the ground.

Then both Meester Bob and that Granny White did turn in the direction of me beside the gate.

"This is Céleste, a friend of mine I brought to your hovering for a few days, Granny," said that kind Meester Bob as he drew me with his hand near to that Granny White. For a moment I stood away, for I do not know what is to be said.

"Come right here to Granny, rosebud," then said that Granny White to me, and she did fold me into her arms and against a very white and soft kerchief upon her bosom that had upon it a fragrance not unlike that from the vine over her door and upon her gate. "Granny understands, and she'll keep you safe." And she did smile down upon me in a

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

very great goodness with sweet gray, aged eyes, while a white curl of much beauty waved from beneath a large and fearful bonnet that had become pushed back from her face.

"It is that I thank you," I made answer to her kindness. "And I rest by you with great contentment."

"And now I'll have to chastise Mamie for her impudence to me in having that baby without me," remarked then that sweet Granny White with a laugh all over her face.

"Bill, I could chastise you for telling the news," answered that kind Meester Bob to that small Bill, who is preparing to start the aged and fat animal into a wide gate at the side of the house. "It's a combination of a whale and an elephant, Granny, and I wanted to break it to you myself."

"It is a child of a greatness of beauty that I have not seen before," I immediately made answer to that kind Meester Bob's unkind remark about my little human, while all the three of us made progress slowly on account of the great largeness of that sweet Granny White into the house.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"The specs women look at babies through have been polished by love and pain, while the men folks use goggles of blue glass on account of jealousy," that sweet Granny made answer to Meester Bob with a nice laugh of great largeness, which made the perfumed kerchief to rise and to fall like a white billow of the ocean. I do not understand all of the words which she did employ, but I knew it to be of a great truth and I looked at that Meester Bob with much triumph.

"Wait here and forgive me for being a brute while poor Mamie catches it from Granny for her disrespect," that Meester Bob did make answer to me as he put forth his hand and drew me under that vine of great fragrance upon the porch of the house.

"Is it that you do not love the little human?" I asked of that kind Meester Bob as he leaned against the wall and did begin to fill with tobacco a very brown little pipe which he had inquired if I will allow that he smoke.

"Do not confuse race approval with love, child," he made answer to me as he blew one little puff of smoke that it might come in my

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

direction. "Love is what pipes from the woods in the full of the moon and, and— Well, it often does have race results. You don't understand a word I say, do you, young child— fortunately?"

"I know about what you speak, but I do not understand all of the words. Teach me what is that 'pipes' which love—"

"A bucket of cool water from the spring would be a nice attention from you, Bob Lawrence, to your Granny, and send that rosebud in here to me to learn a little about riz biscuits as well as moonshine," came a great interruption from the open door in that so kind voice of beloved Granny White.

"Continued later when the moon gets stronger. Coming, Granny!" answered that Meester Bob as he made his disappearance around the house with the large bucket, while I made mine by entering the door with a great rapidity. And within the house what do I find?

## VII

### PRINCE LOUIS AUGUSTUS ON THE TRAIL

I FIND that a great lady, like Céleste de Krymn, is a person of large ignorance about the matters that are important to life. Since very small childhood it is that I have had, for my instruction, many very good governesses, that my Mees Jane and my beautiful lady mother have taken for me with the greatness of care; also masters that I do dance with beauty and fence with slender swords and ride upon fine horses with much grace. A lady has lived always at Krymnwolde that she may instruct the young Countess Céleste in sewing a fine seam of embroideries, and another is for the training of her hands to the piano, also her voice for sweet music, but behold is it that one of these masters and ladies have instructed Céleste de Krymn in a method to break one

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

egg in two parts of respective white and yellow for what is known in Tennessee, America, to be that custard pie? Never!

"Hearts mustn't smash as easy as eggs, rosebud," remarked that much-loved Granny White to me as she did give to me another bowl with two eggs again for a trial when she sees that I begin to weep. "Now that is a nice clean break just as I showed you," she then applauded me as I at last succeeded in making that very perilous division of yellow from white. "Break two more, and for once I'll fill up Bob Lawrence on cup custards, with your assistance."

Oh, it was with such a greatness of joy that I proceed to break many more of the difficult eggs and beat upon them with a spoon that my kind Meester Bob may eat of that custard to his fullness.

"Yes," answered that beloved Granny White to me when she has beheld the greatness of my labor with the nice eggs, "that is about enough to feed a church festival, rosebud, and now it would be a good thing for you to go and tell Mamie not to cuddle that child to death while I am in the kitchen."



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

It is with wings of great gladness that I fly to good Mamie and my beautiful little human. I find that his mother has him to rest in her arms, though not at repast, which is a thing forbid of beloved Granny White.

"Please, child, take him and put that little flannel gown on him that you will find in his Granny's top bureau drawer. It is getting colder as the sun goes down. I'm so glad she finished them all last week," that good Mamie made demand of me as she made a motion of surrender of that fine little human to me.

"Mon Dieu, Céleste, is it that you have had such an education in the delicacies of touch with the foils in fencing and the music on the piano that you should fear to make warm with a garment a so small little boy?" I asked of myself while I did receive the little human from good, pretty Mamie. He is as a rose which wilts to my breast.

"I will do that, sweet Madame Mamie," I made reply to her with courage of voice and face but fear of heart. And with a difficulty of arms and hands on account of the safety of the little human, I made the discovery of the

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

warm garment to place upon him and did seat myself upon the low chair beside the warm fire.

"Assist me, please, good God," I made a quick prayer.

And then of a sudden I find that I know what is never taught to me by a lady governess. I can lift upon my one hand that smallness of the little human and insert it into the warm garment with the other, without murder of any kind. I discover that he can be turned upon his front for fastenings in the back and also at the reverse. And while I did those things, I made discovery of the feet of my little human that are of such a beauty that I made a cry which brought both beloved Granny White and that kind Meester Bob into the room.

"The feet of my little human, behold!" I exclaimed as I regarded the two of them with a great joy of a kind that I had not experienced before.

"Yes, as big feet as that will mean a big man, Mamie," remarked beloved Granny White with a surprising indifference. "They *are* nice feet, rosebud, but cover them up tight or we'll have

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

a colic rumpus," she spoke to me as she made a return to the region of the cooking.

"Is it not that they are beautiful, Meester Bob?" I then made demand of him with a wistfulness that some person would share in my joy for the discovery of the nice feet attached to my little human.

"You are a beautiful kiddie-girl with a new doll," he made answer to me with a very great sweetness of sympathy in his voice. But while he spoke thus to me I saw a deepness of trouble in his eyes that remained there while we are at banquet with the food that beloved Granny had prepared.

And when all is eaten and the light of the sun is about to be entirely gone behind the hill up that Providence Road, we all did repair to the room of good Mamie beside her bed, while small Bill did bring to beloved Granny White a large book of the Bible from which she did read to us with a great slowness about the dear Lord that did lead his child David "beside the still waters" and "into green pastures." That good Mamie has the little human upon her breast and that small Bill has laid his head

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

upon the shoulder of beloved Granny White while she is reading upon the page spread on her knee; and for that moment I am alone, but not when that good, kind Meester Bob did find my hand in the dark that came upon us while beloved Granny asked the care of the all of us during the darkness of the night from our Father in heaven. And then I do not know how it happened, but it did rise in my heart to my lips that I sing the hymn which is beloved of my dear Mees Jane, who is away from me in sorrow and in fear; which I did after the "Amen" of beloved Granny White.

"Lead, kindly light, amid th' encircling gloom,  
Lead Thou me on;"

I sang with all of my heart in my voice through  
to the so beautiful verse:

"So long Thy pow'r hath bless'd me, sure it still  
Will lead me on  
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till  
The night is gone."

"God bless you and keep you, and make his  
sun to shine upon you, child," then said the  
beloved Granny White as I made an end of the

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

hymn. "Lift Bill on the bed, Bob; he's collapsed with sleep," she added as she rose to light a candle that stood on the mantel over the nice fire.

"Come out under the honeysuckles for a little while before Granny tucks you into the cot beside her, Lady of Honey," whispered that kind Meester Bob to me, and I thereupon did follow him out upon the porch and did sit down beside him under the great sweetness of the vine, through which is the moon pouring a rich silver.

"Is it about that love which 'pipes' that you wish to instruct me?" I make demand of him. "I know that word love, but I do not know 'pipes' except in conjunction with tobacco."

"As I have remarked before, you *are* a kid," he made answer to me with but very little smile, and I see that the greatness of anxiety is then upon him. "But I've got to treat you as a woman and a plucky one at that. Granny White brought news of the party which is hunting for you and which Steve has failed to get away over Paradise Ridge. It seems that your respected uncle with foxlike intuition sus-

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

pects me strongly of having made away with you, and he has forced Steve to return down Providence Road to the place where they first met me, near Steve's cottage, to begin another search there. Steve managed to tell it all to Granny while helping her across Little Harpeth. He is leading them twenty miles out of the way but—but they are coming back, and we must be prepared to meet them."

"Oh, will you hide me with quickness again, good Meester Bob?" I cried to him while I did crouch against the great strength of his arm and hold to it tightly.

"Yes, I'm going to hide you, child, and I'm going to—to keep you—until—until you grow up or I am shown a just cause for relinquishing you," that Meester Bob made answer to me with very great and strong quietness. "But I've got to leave you, dear, and that is what I am going to talk to you about."

"Oh no, good Meester Bob, kind Meester Bob, it is not possible to me that you leave me!" I made a great cry to him and did cling the closer to that strong arm which I felt to tremble as I felt my own body to do.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"Yes, dear, I must go and assist in that search, and I have a plan that I think will send them out of the Harpeth woods forever," he made answer to my cry, while his large hand did gather in the both of my cold ones that had grown so warm in ministering to my little human in the security of happiness.

"Tell it to me; but it is not possible for me that I permit you to leave me," I made answer to him, while I hid my tearful eyes in his sleeve.

"I'm going to cut through the woods to-night and meet them in the morning as if coming in from the way they saw me go, and I am going to lead them to the ruins of Steve's house. Then I shall have the pleasure of showing them the place of your death."

"Am I to die?" I asked in a greatness of bewilderment at his strange words.

"No, thank God!" he then did exclaim, and I thought for one little minute that he would take me into his embrace, but received a great disappointment.

"I am going to let them find the scraps of blue silk of your dress and the wreck of a small shoe that came very near to breaking my heart

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

day before yesterday while I waited in uncertainty for Shep to come back from her search of you." And this time my good Meester Bob did give me a small shake by my shoulders that was of the nature of an embrace.

"Oh, I do understand now that my very wicked uncle will then return to Belgium to the possession of all of Krymn and of Berseck and that nice Louis Augustus can say to his Emperor that it is impossible that he marry a great Belgian lady who is in many pieces with a red swine. I am of great joy," I made response to that idea which that Meester Bob had with difficulty placed in my mind.

"Listen to me, Céleste—as a woman and not as a child," then said that kind Meester Bob with sternness in answer to my cry of great joy. "If I prove to that old scoundrel that you are dead then it will be well-nigh impossible to ever prove again that you are alive. By leading him to that ruined cottage with a half-dozen witnesses I put Céleste, the Countess de Krymn, forever out of her world, and I leave a nameless young girl down in Tennessee to begin life over with only a few simple farmer folk



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

and one lone man as her friends. All over this Harpeth Valley there are kind farmers like these whose roof so gladly shelters you, and there are a few of us of somewhat higher rank in the world who will as gladly give you a place in the social life of our little towns, which have a rather haughty aristocracy of their own, but among us there is not the excitement and luxury of court life, and my home, which is what would be called one of the great estates of Tennessee, is only a home on the order of this, much larger, but in no sense a palace. Now there is no one to advise you but me, and I must do it conscientiously or be a cad. If it meant giving you up to the schemes of that old man entirely I would keep you—I'd defy him to get you from my arms since God Himself had thrown you into them in my own forest—but if I ever saw a fine man and a great gentleman it is the Prince Louis Augustus. I am able to judge him for his worth from my years at old Heidelberg, which brought me the friendship of some of his class, and no better are created. Also from the agony in his young eyes that he held in leash with the stoicism of a soldier, I know that he loves you.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

If you will take him for your husband you will have a great destiny, and I cannot have you throw it aside lightly. You must think, and you must think as a woman thinks for her own future and, as you have said, for the future of your children." And when he had made a pause of speaking he rose to his feet, did that grand Meester Bob, and I also stood as tall and as stately as is possible to me beside him.

"Is it that you want that I leave you?" I then made demand of him in the voice and manner of a very old and great lady, though my heart is beating with a loudness in my breast for fear of the answer he might make to me.

"What I feel in the matter is not now under discussion—*must* not be. You must search your heart and see if there is not that in it which will allow you to accept the future the prince offers you. I am going to leave you now and ride up the road to meet Steve and his party. You must think and make your decision before we pass by on our way to the ruins. If you decide for the prince, come out and surrender to him; if not, keep in hiding, and I will try and take them by without a search of the house.

## VIII

### IN QUEST OF A PIE GIRL

AND within the house of beloved Granny White all is ready now for the peace and sleep of a long night. Upon the whiteness of her curls she has put a large cap with wide ruffles, while in the room of that good Mamie all is darkness except for the silver of the moon. In her hand that beloved Granny has a candle and in her other hand is also a very large bunch of keys, while upon her shoulders she wears a small gray shawl.

"I'm just going out to the hen-house to see if old Red and old Dominicker are setting faithfully on the eggs I put under them yesterday. Hens, even the best of them, are like women about cutting their minds on the bias. Do you want to come with me and hold the candle, child?"

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"With a great happiness I will go with you, beloved Madame White," I returned instant answer to her, while making a quick swallow of the tears rising from my throat to my eyes.

"You don't mean that you don't love your Granny when you call her Madame White, do you, rosebud? That is just a pretty frill of manners you are handing me as a compliment, isn't it?" my beloved, aged friend asked of me, with a beautiful laugh that shook her largeness exceedingly.

"Oh, it is a great love that has come into my heart for you, kind Granny! I would that for my life I might rest always in your house with you," I made a quick answer to her as we did go forth in the light of the moon to a small house from which is heard some cluckings as of chickens.

"Well, it wouldn't surprise me if we were neighbors before these hatches have well feathered, child. Some courting gets pin-feathers over night. Now that Bob Lawrence is— Tut, tut, old Red, you've cracked one of your eggs with that scaly old foot of yours. Move and let me take it out before it breaks

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

and spoils your nest." And my beloved Granny White interrupted her speaking of kind Meester Bob, in words which I did not entirely comprehend but very much liked, to address the perturbed red chicken.

"What is that 'pin-feathers' and 'courting,' please, kind Granny White?" I asked of her, but she made to me only a hen reply:

"You'll have to hold old Red, child, while I get out this egg without a muss of breaking it," she directed me, and thereupon did hand to me the large and very cross chicken.

"Remember, Céleste, you have been instructed that you hold tightly a bridle of a restive horse with grace," I advised to myself to still a greatness of fear as I received the chicken into my arms. "I shall bestow upon my children an education of not so much embroidery," I also made the resolution to myself in a low breath while I did hold fast the hen chicken in a close embrace. Also I made nice motions of soothing upon its very energetic head which was ended by a beak of great sharpness.

"Bob Lawrence is no earthly good with chickens or I would have made him help me settle

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

these biddies before he left. It takes a very soothing hand to prevent squawks of chickens as well as of life, and I see that you have got it, child. Mamie could not have held old Red quiet like that for me. Now give her here." And as she commanded I placed that chicken into the arms of my beloved Granny White with a greatness of pride, also of relief.

"Is it that kind Meester Bob has not many chickens in his home?" I asked of that Granny White as she is making a last settlement of that Madame Red chicken and that Madame Gray whom I now know to call Madame Dominicker.

"Child, that great big house of Bob Lawrence's over at Hillcrest is the most empty place in this whole world, though full of more fine mahogany furniture and old family painted likenesses than you can shake a stick at. There is not a hen in the yard, not a flower in the garden, not a pickle or a preserve in the closet, not a pie on the pantry shelf, and all on account of the absence of a woman. If some nice housekeeping girl don't marry him soon, I'll have to adopt him and move him over here.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

As it is, I have to feed him and mend him and doctor him at long distance, and I'm about ready for his wife. Besides, I don't want him to travel to foreign parts any more. I want him to begin to walk babies of nights."

"Oh, beloved Granny White! Is it that you seek a nice wife for that kind Meester Bob?" I made demand of her with very little breath in my throat. "In my country I think it is so arranged that it is possible that—"

"Shoo, shoo, Dommie! Hold the candle a little closer for another minute, child," again that Granny White made an interruption to the greatness of my anxiety for learning about the life of that Monsieur Robert of Lawrence and the betrothing of him also. And as I held the candle for the administration of more straw under the Madame Gray chicken I understood that it was not a time for questions. And also it did arrive in my heart the meaning of those words "nice housekeeping girl," which I am not.

"Céleste, it is possible for you to make a fine bow at court and to dance and to sing for maybe that poor Louis Augustus, but you do not know well about a 'pie on the pantry shelf,'

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

alas!" I say to myself with a great sadness as I follow beloved Granny White back into her so comfortable home.

And in a nice little room with a beautiful largeness of roses on the wall, beloved Granny White did place me in bed. There is a wide door into the room of pretty, good Mamie and when I am attired in the great largeness of one of the robes of night of beloved Granny White, I did creep in to view my little human at sleep. And also I find that small Bill at sleep in a cot beside good Mamie mother. I feel as a little child also after beloved Granny White has placed me on my pillow with many tuckings of the blanket around me and has given me a kiss with another little prayer thereto.

"Good night! God bless you and keep you, child!"

But sleep did not come to the weariness of my eyes while I am so safe in that white small bed beside good Mamie and beloved Granny White, also the little human and that small Bill. My kind Meester Bob had commanded me that I ponder upon that poor, nice Louis Augustus that I may decide to be a wife to him. And



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

hand was laid upon my head with a great gentleness.

"I will not weep further, small Bill, to disturb you in sleeping. Return to your nice bed," I made promise to him.

"I'll get in here with you so that you can hold my hand if it hurts any more," he made answer to me, and did thereupon creep within my blanket, and hold fast to my hand while falling into sleep with a great quickness.

And I think that sleep must be of a great contagion, for almost in the same number of moments I also know nothing more, there in the kind care of that small Bill. Then it is morning and I hear my beloved Granny White calling out a nice breakfast to the good chickens. Small Bill I discover to be gone from beside me and a nice aroma of pone bread is coming from the room of the kitchen.

And immediately I am upon my feet and clothing myself in that dress of homespun which is now a gift from good Mamie to me.

In the night, while I had wept with so great a grief, I had thought that this day would be one of terror and unhappiness to me, but behold!

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

when it is arrived I am living it with a greatness of interest.

Good, pretty Mamie had allowed that I did make the toilet of my very little human immediately upon the finish of the toilet I had given to the dishes for our breakfast of a very great deliciousness, at the direction of my beloved Granny White, who must then go to overlook the work of three large black men in a field not far distant. And I announce that it is impossible that any woman, even only one of embroideries, should grieve or have terrors while in the danger of soap upon a very young human. All must be at loving attention. I had the very greatness of joy after a finish with nice powder to my little human before his insertion into clean garments, and it was with a great thankfulness that I returned him to his mother for repast with only a very few small cries in the operation of the bath.

"Thank you, child! You have a fine hand with babies," that kind Mamie made acknowledgment to me with a very pretty smile.

"It is also the same kind hand with chickens

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

as beloved Granny White told me last evening," I made response with a very vain pride.

"You are a perfectly beautiful darling," returned that good Mamie to me, with a laugh and a compliment.

"But I am not for pie," I responded to the confusion of mind of good Mamie; and must then run to bring a little water for small Bill to mix into bread to feed to the chickens of Granny White while she is not thereby to attend upon their repast.

"Céleste de Krymn," I then said to myself in my heart, "this day you are one fine house-keeping girl in Tennessee before you must be a great lady of Belgium and Germany to-morrow. When long years follow themselves, you can keep in your heart the greatness of joy that was yours in the house of beloved Granny White on Providence Road, and perhaps when you come to death it will be granted to you to stop in this house again for a visit on the road to heaven. Do all the nice work for these good friends that you can find for your hands. No, do not weep!" And immediately I did go forth with small Bill to collect many eggs in a

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

large basket, also to administer warm milk to two little cows of a so great youngness that it is difficult for them to manage with great grace their long legs.

And then it falls upon that small Bill and upon me that we must endeavor to make butter from a large quantity of milk of a great solidness which beloved Granny did pour into a tall vessel and upon which first small Bill and then Céleste de Krymn must pound up and down with a broad and circular stick. I had not before known that good butter, which I like very much, arrives with such difficulty to the breath of the person who produces it. Very soon I am in exhaustion, though that small Bill is able to pound up and down much longer until, behold, a great yellowness is accomplished for the delight of beloved Granny White.

"You're a girl," that small Bill made answer to the apologies that I offered to him for the absence of my breath in that pounding. "Girls' arms are soft and not much good."

I found a small laugh in my throat at a remembrance of the times I have pricked with

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

my foil twice the breast of that nice young Sir Arthur Cheetwood in Devonshire, whose wrists are said to be of steel, but I only returned with a great meekness this remark to small Bill:

"Please excuse me!"

"Do you want to help me pick the beans for dinner?" very soon demanded that small Bill of me, with a large basket in his hand, though I had made preparations to seat myself for a short time beside sweet Mamie for admiration of my little human.

"I come!" I made answer to his demand, and followed into the garden immediately, having put upon my head a wide, deep bonnet for protection from the sun.

And it was a very long time that both small Bill and Céleste made progress down a long trench, with a snapping of green vegetables from hard stems. I felt myself to have a nearness of exhaustion, and once more I was in fear that I must make apologies to that small Bill when of a suddenness he stopped and began to listen into the air.

"I hear horses coming down Providence Road. I bet it is my dad and Mister Bob."

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

You go on picking the beans while I go see," he directed me as he ran with a great swiftness in the direction of the large gate.

And as I am thus deserted by small Bill, suddenly a greatness of fear came down upon me that is more terrible than any I had yet had, not excepting of those mines under the large ship in the ocean or when I find myself thrown from the train away from my dear Mees Jane Forsythe.

"Do not fear. No harm can come to you when you present yourself to that nice Louis Augustus to go forth with him," I counseled myself as I made a seat upon some of the green vines with a great suddenness.

For many long minutes I sat there upon the ground of the garden of my beloved Granny White and did tremble and weep while I heard approach nearer and nearer my destiny from across the broad ocean beyond the lady of liberty. How was I to find strength of a sufficiency to go to meet it?

Then as I looked forth from the deep sun-bonnet I saw the horsemen draw rein at the white gate with its vine of such a great sweet-

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

ness and my wicked uncle Dyreck is the foremost, though it was with a great stiffness that he is assisted upon the ground by that Lieutenant Franz Van Reet, who had also been of a great kindness to me upon the large ship when it is impossible that my Mees Jane Forsythe can stand upon the deck. And that same heart in the breast of Céleste de Krymn, which had been of such a softness under the small head of my little human not one short hour ago, is as hard as cold ice.

"Count de Berseck and Krymn shall render me return one day for this time that he has hunted me like unto a wild animal. I shall call upon that great Emperor for his punishment," I did say to myself, and I thereupon arose as tall and as straight as is possible to me and did walk with dignity through the garden of beloved Granny White and on to the back porch of the kitchen, the large basket with the beans within my hand.

## IX

### I HEAR MY DEATH-WARRANT

AND as I went past the large white barn I remarked that my kind Meester Bob is riding beside that poor, nice Louis Augustus in a very great deepness of conversation, which was as if he comforted him for some great sorrow for which the prince did weep, as is the privileged custom for men in Germany. I am not of a very great curiosity about the reason for this grief, for I had assisted at the plans of its source. A tragedy has occurred which is making a very greatness of excitement. In my dress of a peasant, in my deep sunbonnet and with my basket of those beans in my hand, I came and stood very still by the door of the front room for living of my beloved Granny White.

Before the chimney of rude stone is standing my uncle Dyreck, Count de Berseck and



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

Krymn, with his two gentlemen and that Lieutenant Van Reet, while opposite to him is my beloved Granny White so placed that she can look into my face, though he cannot. And in the arms of that very large and beloved Granny White, against the white and fragrant kerchief, is my small human in deep repose within his blanket.

"Good woman," is saying my august and contemptible relative, in the manner of a greatness of superiority that he does use to the servants of Krymnwolde to their very great hatred of him, "place out a table that my secretary may make out an affidavit of the death of my niece in these damnable American forests for the signing of witnesses at the discovery."

"Here, daughter, take your child into the sunshine to sleep," then said that beloved Granny White as she did quickly cross to me and lay the little human in my arms, from which I then dropped the basket so that the nice green beans rolled to the exact feet of my enraged uncle. "Sit down there in full sight, but keep on that sunbonnet," she commanded me from under her breath.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"Stupid pigs of American slowness!" then remarked my uncle Dyreck in an extreme of rage. "Write there at that table, Van Gwan!" he commanded his secretary, who is of an extreme meekness.

"You are welcome, stranger, to the hospitality of my house, which you use as if only accustomed to that of the pigs that you name with the freedom of a brother in blood," remarked that beloved Granny White, with a smile upon my enraged relative that is of a great sweetness.

"Hold your tongue, woman," he made answer to her with a great roughness, "or I'll see to it that—"

"What was it you were saying, Count de Berseck and Krymn?" then came a nice question in the kind voice of my Meester Bob, who stood upon the threshold of the door with the murder of a man in his beautiful eyes.

With the little human tight to my breast, I rose to my feet.

"I am having prepared an affidavit of the death of my niece, to which I ask your signature, Monsieur de Lawrence," then made reply my uncle Dyreck with a manner of as great polite-

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

ness to kind Meester Bob as was his of rudeness to my beloved Granny White in this her own house.

And as he did make that reply to kind Meester Bob, who has not the appearance of extreme kindness at that moment, that nice, poor Louis Augustus arrived at the side of Meester Bob in the doorway, and I am desolated to see what sorrow is in his face for the death of me.

And as I regarded him I saw that my Meester Bob is looking into my face with eyes which ask of me a great question, whether I will come forth from that sunbonnet and make myself known to kind Louis Augustus and to unkind Uncle Dyreck.

For a very long moment I stand within the eyes of my kind Meester Bob, not very far away from that loving and grieved young prince and so close to the arm of that wicked uncle that it is possible for him to slay me with a blow did he wish—and in my heart I made the great decision for my life.

“What do you do?” those eyes of my kind Meester Bob pleaded into mine, while a strongness is set upon his mouth and it has no smile.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"I stay," is the answer I give with my eyes to his.

And then with a greatness of calm I did seat myself upon the chair by the door, turn upon my knee, with a greatness of skill that in itself is a fine disguise for me, the little human and begin to take the husk from the large beans that are left in the basket, while I did listen to the death of myself which that secretary of great meekness did read from the paper which he had written upon the table of beloved Granny White.

A long mention is made of the way I have been thrown from that train by my kind Mees Jane, who is declared to be of a great insanity, and have wandered into a peasant's hut upon which lightning is descended with dynamite and has made me into such small pieces that all of me is consumed by fire except four small sections of my blue dress of silk and one small shoe with a silver buckle thereupon.

When that secretary did read about the blueness of my dress being found, I saw that the hand of poor, nice Louis Augustus did go to the pocket in his coat that is over his heart; and also that

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

the hand of my Meester Bob did seek the pocket of his hunting-coat from where he had shown me the piece of my shoe from which that good Shep dog had been given scent by him to find me lost with that small Bill in the forest. I had a great hurt that the two honest gentlemen should thus cherish the remains of me, but what was it that I could do but hold my little human tight in my arms with a slow rocking and not look at all at the eyes of my Meester Bob?

"And now, gentlemen, I will ask you to sign this," said my uncle Dyreck when the paper had made a final death finish of me nicely and to his great satisfaction. "Prince, will you sign first?" And he handed the gold pen from his pocket to that poor, nice Louis Augustus.

"It is for the death of the most lovely and beautiful lady in all of Europe that I must mourn, Count de Berseck," said that nice Louis Augustus after he had made his signature to the paper.

And as he thus did speak of me with a greatness of sorrow, I felt that the eyes of my kind Meester Bob were again upon me in a question

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

of what will I do; but I did make a great rocking of the little human and stayed deep within the white sunbonnet.

"Will you also sign it, dear Madame?" nice Prince Louis Augustus asked of my beloved Granny White with as much beauty of manner as he has ever given to me. For that I did love him.

"Well," beloved Granny White returned answer to him as she stood over beside Meester Bob in the doorway, "the dress and the shoes and Steve's and Mamie's house are dead, that's certain, and I'm going to sign for seeing them in that condition," with which words, that are for the purpose to prevent that she should make a lie, that beloved Granny White did also sign the paper.

"Thank you, Granny, for the adjustment of your conscience," then made reply to her that kind Meester Bob, while he did make a long pause and look at me in that white sunbonnet with a great hardness before he made his signature also to my death.

After that good Steve is summoned from where he is making a promise of a new house to

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

sweet Mamie, and he is the last witness to my death upon the paper which makes it legal that Céleste de Krymn is no more in the world.

"It is imperative that we depart immediately, as it is many miles to the station. Gentlemen, your horses!" then said my wicked uncle with a great hurry upon him. He is in a very good happiness now that all of Berseck and of Krymn are in his possession, and a smile of delight is behind his mouth that I am sold to death, if it could not be to Germany. "Here is a piece of money, good woman," he added also as he tossed upon the table a round piece of silver.

"No, thank you, mister," made reply to him that delicious Granny White, "you are the only man who ever left the house of Mary White unfed at the noon hour, and I haven't got any use for your money just now. Here it is!" And she did make a return of the piece of silver, while my good Meester Bob stood close by to see what it is that my wicked uncle might say to that beloved woman. And he made no remark at all, but did turn on his heel and go from the room, with kind Meester Bob beside him, making a request of great politeness that

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

he should go to the railroad with them, because of not any more confidence in that good Steve who has not made them to find me before my death. There also followed the meek secretary and the gentlemen of the prince, so that only nice Louis Augustus remained in the room with beloved Granny White, with my little human and me in the low chair by the door.

"Madame, will you do for me a so great favor?" he made demand of her with a very great and beautiful gentleness. "Will you purchase for me a beautiful flower and make it to bloom in the garden near to that small cottage home of your daughter when it is again erected?" And in his hand he held out to beloved Granny White a large piece of gold.

For one long moment I see that it is of a great hardness for beloved Granny White to find some words to say.

"I'll take your gold, my son, and make it bring heart-ease to folks in want all over this Harpeth Valley in remembrance of the love in which it was given. God bless and keep you," she finally made answer to him as he bent with a great stateliness and kissed her hand, then



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

was gone from the door with rapidity and upon his horse which his gentleman held beside that of kind Meester Bob. And for a long minute that beloved Granny White did stand and regard her very large hand, that is so much marked with work, with a very funny expression of face.

"Well, it took a Dutch prince to kiss your hand at the age of sixty-five, Mary White," she finally said with a smile of great sweetness in her beautiful blue and aged eyes. "Also, he is God's own good man, child, and don't you ever forget that."

"I weep for him," I made her an answer as I lifted the white sunbonnet from my head and buried my eyes in the neck of my little human who is in fast repose.

"Well, it's too late now for you to cry after him, rosebud, so put down that child and let's get to shelling those beans. Hunger will look out of the pot and grin at us before they are done, I am afraid."

"Where is it that you think kind Meester Bob is gone and not saying a word to me what to do, beloved Granny White?" I made a de-

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

mand of her after I have assisted in taking aloose from the shells many millions of those butter-beans and can no longer refrain from such a question. That kind Meester Bob had left me without one look at me and ridden away with my wicked uncle and the poor, nice Louis Augustus. I have a very greatness of puzzle and a small hurt that he has not given to me just one smile that should say:

"Honey lady, I will come back for you."

"Women waste about half their time speculating about the return of man," said that nice Granny White, "and learn early, child, that it will always happen when you don't expect it. Bob will have to ride ten miles into Bolivar to put the party on the train, and it will be near sundown when the cars come along for the North. He can't get back here until into the night, and if he has good sense, which I doubt, he will stay in Bolivar for his night's rest and come out to see us all in the morning. However, I'll set up half a chicken, a few corn-pones, and a whole pie, you are going to make at supper-time, on a shelf in the pantry in case he proves himself as foolish as I take him to be.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

This is the full of the moon, and men don't always act with brains at such times. Now all the beans are finished and into the pot they go, while you run out with this pan of scraps for a noon compliment to your friends who are setting on their eggs so peacefully to-day."

"You are so greatly beloved of me, my Granny White," I did remark to her, with one minute of my head on that white kerchief of such fragrance.

"Compliments to old folks are mighty near as sweet as the whole jug of molasses, child," she did make answer to me with a nice kiss upon my cheek as I departed with the repast for those chickens of now such good conduct.

And while going in the direction of that building, which I now know to call a barn, I was joined by small Bill, who was then of much business in giving water to the little cows and also to the mother of three little dogs that hold such a greatness of interest to me that I did remain in his company.

"You and me and maw and that baby have got to stay with Granny maybe more than two months while dad gets some money to build

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

us another house. 'Money don't grow on trees,' he says. I don't care, because I like this house the best, but maw cried about it," that small Bill did make remark to me, with much seriousness, while kindly arranging food for the dog mother.

"My jewels—they must rest in my bag which kind Meester Bob did bring for me!" I made exclamation with such a suddenness that I caused small Bill to spill a part of the cool water from the pan for that dog mother. "We can find much gold also for the building of the house of sweet Mamie. I will go and give it to her that she shall not weep," I excused myself to him and departed from him with a greatness of haste.

But the beautiful eagerness in my heart must be stilled for a space of time yet, for upon my arrival at the house of beloved Granny White I find that upon the table is a beautiful repast for which small Bill must be summoned to make a bath of his hands and face beside me in that large pan of tin with water and the clean cloth. Thereupon we did shine with a great radiance of cleanliness and consumed much good food with that fine pone bread in many large pieces.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

After the toilet to the dishes of a great blue prettiness, my beloved Granny White came to the bedside of that sweet Mamie with the sewing of a small garment for the little human in her hands and did seat herself in a chair that is of a sufficient wideness and strength, which is always reserved to her. Mamie had made a fine dinner from the plate brought to her, and the little human is now at repast, so that all is in peace at about the center of the afternoon.

"It is a fine time in which to give to that sweet Mamie the gold and jewels for the new small house, Céleste, who is now called the Lady of Honey," I made remark to myself as I went into my little room of the roses and the small white bed. And in that leather bag, which has so much adventured in that big Harpeth Valley forest of that kind Meester Bob, I made discovery of the canvas case in which are tightly bound all of the jewels of Krymn, which I also believe that wicked uncle Dyreck suspects of being in a bank in London, England.

## X

### THE JEWELS OF KRYMN

I UNWOUND the wrappings, with first breaking of a large seal, and discover that the great emeralds have been removed from the tiara of my beautiful mother, for wearing at court, and are unset in a manner that prevents wearing, as are also the rubies of Berseck and the white diamond necklace of Krymn. I found myself in a greatness of disappointment, for I had thought to please Mamie with the gift of perhaps a bracelet and also that beloved Granny White with perhaps a brooch of diamonds or emeralds. But all are now separated and apart from all setting, with only a writing on each bag to say how much is the value of each collection. On a separate piece of paper is the sum of the whole which I now remark to be more than five million francs.

“That is much money in Belgium, but not in

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

America, I think," I made remark to myself as I took with me the bag and also one of gold coin that had made very heavy the satchel for kind Meester Bob to bring on that Goodboy horse who is of such a strongness. Then I returned into the presence of beloved Granny White and that sweet Mamie.

"Behold, sweet Madame Mamie, here is much money that will make it possible to buy one other small house of perhaps more beauty than the one which is exploded by lightning and dynamite, though perhaps not so polite another red swine," I made remark as I poured out my jewels and gold all upon the very white covering of the bed. It is almost that I made an accident of one very large ruby coming upon the head of my beautiful little human.

"Good gracious! child, where did all that come from?" made exclamation that beloved Granny White, but with a continuation of her sewing.

"Oh, how lovely!" that sweet Mamie did make outcry as she took into her fingers some diamonds and emeralds.

"They are the jewels of my beautiful mother

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

and also of all the ladies of Berseck and Krymn now dead," I made answer. "I grieve that they are not in tiaras and necklaces and in brooches and bracelets that I may make gifts to you, sweet Mamie and my beloved Granny White, but I can have them set thereto. But in them is also much money, more than five million francs this paper remarks, and with it we can buy the house for Mamie and much lace for my little human, maybe, beside." As I made a finish of speaking, I lifted in my arms the little human from the finish of his repast and put my lips upon the exquisite softness of his cheek.

"Five million dollars, child?" then demanded that beloved Granny White, making a short pause with her needle as she regarded me over the top of the glasses upon her eyes.

"No, see it is francs the paper writes, and in one American dollar are five francs, so it is not a great fortune," I made answer, giving the paper to her with the hand that is not in embrace of the little human upon my shoulder.

"No, only about a million dollars at this calculation of five to one, and the Lord help



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

you, child, with such a burden!" made answer to me beloved Granny White after she had regarded the paper upon which is the count of the jewels with much interest.

"A million dollars!" that good, sweet Mamie made a repetition of the announcement of beloved Granny White.

And thereupon a very strange thing did happen. My beloved Granny White did begin to laugh with such a great heartiness of joy that under Mamie's direction I must make blows upon her back with my fist for her return of breath.

"And to think of that million dollars being right here in my lean-to under the very beak of that old gentleman bird, while he's expecting to find it safe for him to get out of the London bank by use of that writing of your death with the name of Mary White to it! I'm going to laugh again—and pat me hard if I don't come out right away, child." And thereupon my beloved Granny made another so great laugh that I was forced once more to restore her with blows.

"And I'll also wager that Bob Lawrence is at

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

this moment hugging to his heart the idea of rescuing a destitute little princess and buying her frills for her until death. Here, pat me again, child!" And it is a third time that I have to make rescue of my beloved Granny White, while Mamie is also laughing so that my little human, whom I had been forced to restore to her by my ministrations to beloved Granny White, made a very sweet little plaint.

"I had not thought to speak to that Meester Bob of the jewels while I am so unhappily hunted. I will make confession to him when he is returned," I made remark as I again reclaimed my little human from that sweet Mamie.

"Child, promise to let me break that bag of pretty rocks to Bob Lawrence like he was wanting to break that baby there of disrespectful Mamie to me. Don't tell or show him when I'm not present. No, I'm not going to laugh again, for I want to finish this nightgown for the baby before dark, and look how the sun is sneaking away." And again beloved Granny White made stitches with a great rapidness.

"And it is then that in America I can buy that little house for Mamie and my little human,

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

as well' as that small Bill and his father, with this much money?" I again asked, for I did not entirely understand all the words that made for such a greatness of mirth in that beloved Granny White.

"Bless your beautiful heart, when the time comes you can buy what pleases you, and I reckon Mamie can put up with a house that costs much less than a million dollars, as she's been living in three rooms and a lean-to. Also you shall stay right here as long as you are happy, and I reckon your Granny can defend you from a lot of million-dollar miseries as long as you need her," made reply beloved Granny White to me in my anxiety about the abode of that sweet Mamie.

"But what about that pie that has got to be made for Bob Lawrence before the sun sets?" made demand of me beloved Granny White as she achieved a finish for the garment for the little human and folded it to put beside the others belonging to him in a chest of drawers by the window. "Put away those beautiful rocks and come let's get the night work done before twilight prayer."

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"I come," I made joyful answer.

And it was with a greatness of activity in many duties the hours which followed were spent.

"Céleste, yesterday you did give to yourself one day in which to be that nice housekeeping girl with vegetables and pickles and pie, and now behold you begin a long life thereof," I made remark to myself while I put the eggs, which I had beaten to a great lightness after a triumphant separation of white and of yellow at breaking, into that custard pie for my kind Meester Bob.

Then after a large quantity of work the sun did come to its setting, and all in the house of beloved Granny White did seat themselves for rest and prayer, as had been done the night that came before. It was with great pleasure that I put night apparel upon my little human and made wholly clean that small Bill for the little white bed that is beside sweet Mamie mother for him.

"If anything skeers you in the dark again call me to kill it, girl," he said to me with a great comfort in his voice that also had such a great-

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

ness of sleep in it that I did dare to put one kiss upon the yellow head of that small Bill, which he did immediately brush from his locks, though near into a depth of sleep.

And then when approached the time for the retirement of my beloved Granny White, with her very large cap upon her head and a candle lighted beside her bed, I did beg of her that I might stay in my dress by the window to enjoy the greatness of the beauty of the moon.

"Don't forget the supper on the pantry shelf, if he comes, child," she admonished me upon retirement. "Soft moonshine doesn't take the place of corn-pone and chicken with a hungry man. Good night!"

## XI

### THE PIPES OF LOVE

**T**HEN, when all is quiet in that nice house of beloved Granny White, I am alone in the silver light of the moon under the sweetness of the vine upon the front door and for long minutes I can think of all the things of great wonder that had befallen me that day. A very small breeze is coming down that Providence Road that is of the softness of summer, while in it is the perfume from many harvests in the field of beloved Granny White, which the black men have made into little piles that day. Also there is the scent of the ripe apples in the orchard, which that small Bill had collected in many baskets for the pressing of sweet wine therefrom by another of the black men, mingled with that of the harvest and of the vine. And very large tears arise from that lake in my heart

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

when I think that all of my beautiful Belgium is in hunger, and I did long that I might send some of each of these foods in a large ship to their feeding.

"You can buy the food, Céleste, with the jewels after is purchased that house for good Mamie, and so send back to Belgium the jewels of the ladies of Berseck and Krymn which are transmuted into food for the little children of their country. Is it not that the good God has led you into these 'green pastures' and beside these 'still waters' that you may so comfort your own people?" I made demand of myself, while during all of the time that passes with such a slowness I am listening to see if I can hear the quick steps of that fine horse Goodboy.

Then I heard something!

"Is it that Goodboy horse?" I questioned myself, with a greatness of attention.

No, it cannot be, for it is slow and comes with a great heaviness, but in a few minutes, behold! I see in the silver moonshine that it is that fine Goodboy horse with that Shep dog running very far behind with a lameness of his feet.

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

And then a very strangeness of fear did come upon me of my kind Meester Bob, and made me to hide myself deep in the vines while he went with that Goodboy horse into the barn after having given to him a long drinking beside the door. I listened very closely and did hear him make a supper for the fatigue of his horse before he had even given to himself a drink of water at the well near by.

"Go quickly, Céleste de Krymn, to give food and drink to that good and fatigued man even as he has done to the horse Goodboy," I made remark to myself as I went with a great rapidity through that house and on to the back porch which is also covered with a great sweetness of vine.

And as I came forth from the doorway into the silver of the moon and the fragrance of the breeze of the night, behold, I am standing before that kind Meester Bob, looking down into the great beauty of his eyes while he is looking up into mine.

"Dear?" he at last asked question of me after long minutes of time, and as he spoke that one word, which I do so love, he held out



## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

to me the strength of those arms which had given me shelter in forest and in storm, but never an embrace before.

And into those arms of the greatness of love I made entry.

"You gift of God to me out of a clear sky," he made a whispering to me from the stillness of his heart as I pressed me closer into those arms.

"Is it that you do want to keep forever by you this poor Belgium girl?" I made demand of him.

"I kiss your hands in fealty, your hair in reverence, your eyes in adoration, and your lips—your lips, Céleste, in—love," he made answer to me as he did those things to me in a great slowness of tenderness, while the silver moon and the night wind did wrap about us a soft garment of perfumed radiance.

"Is it that love which you have said 'pipes' in a forest?" I made demand of him against his ear with my lips in kissing.

"Across half the world it calls and must be answered, darling. Didn't you hear it over there amid the tumult of war?"

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"I think it is perhaps my good, kind Mees Jane that did hear those 'pipes,'" I made response to him with a deepness of consideration.

"No, my Lady of Honey, it was not your kind Miss Jane that heard love-pipes, thanks be!" answered that Meester Bob, with a laugh for which I had fear I might be forced to give him blows as I had done to beloved Granny White, but with a great suddenness he is sad again.

"Child," he said to me, holding me in the strength of his arms, but also with the great tenderness, "it is true that from sadness and sorrow you have come to me and have crept into the very recesses of my heart that I thank God I have kept empty all these years to receive you, but I am not going to take you to wife without all the due formalities from the good woman who snatched you as a brand from the burning, whether she acted wisely or not. You shall stay right here with Granny until we find her to come to you and then—then—do you think you will love me enough after you have had time to learn?"

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

"Oh! and also learn to be that 'housekeeping girl' for you so that there may always be the pickle and the preserve and the vegetable, that beloved Granny White made mention of, in your large home," I made reply to him with a great eagerness. Then for a short minute I made a pause with a greatness of distress.

"Please, Meester Bob, make a pardon for me that I have given to you many embraces and not the chicken and that good pone bread and pie of my making. I have acted in the manner which that beloved Granny White has said to be bad for a man with hunger. Please come to that kitchen for a supper from me!" And with a laugh he came with me for me to serve him.

"Honey bunch," he did say to me after I have set all forth with a greatness of pride in the beauty of that pie, "I suppose I'll have to admit that it is best for that poor prince chap that you sat back in that white sunbonnet and let him pass along, because I detect domestic traits in you that might have cropped out to the confusion of your career as

## OUT OF A CLEAR SKY

a princess. I don't know what will come to us in the years from this beautiful adventure, but you are, you *are* the gift of God to me which no man can take from me." And right in the front of that pie of such beauty again that kind Meester Bob did take me into his kind arms.

For much more than an hour of beautiful and short minutes my Meester Bob sat upon the steps of the porch under the sweet vine beside me and explained much about love to me with laughter and the tenderness of a gentle embrace.

"Now you must go to bed or we'll have a hurricane in the form of your Granny White descend upon us, honey lady," he said as he lifted me to my feet and stood on the step below me. "Good night, you, God's blessing to Bob Lawrence!"

Then I gave unto myself a great happiness the like of which I did not know could come into the life of a person and which made me to experience the woman of me unfold from the child he had found lost in the forest. I reached forth my bare arms and took his very weary head upon my breast for a short little second

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